40

BATMAN
DC'S ANIMATED DARK KNIGHT

NEIL GAIMAN
ON SANDMAN, ANGELA, AND HIS NEW HERO

WIZARD®

DECEMBER 1994
NUMBER 40
$3.95 U.S.A.
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THE GUIDE TO COMICS

...TRICK OR TREAT!

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PROFESSOR X IS DEAD
AND HIS STRUGGLE FOR PEACE BETWEEN MUTANTS AND HUMANS WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A DREAM.

PROFESSOR X IS DEAD

AND HIS STRUGGLE FOR PEACE BETWEEN MUTANTS AND HUMANS WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A DREAM.

THIS IS THE REALITY.
DENNIS J CALERO

BEGINNING THIS DECEMBER IN

X-MEN: ALPHA #1

48 PAGES BY
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MARK WAID
AND
ROGER CRUZ.

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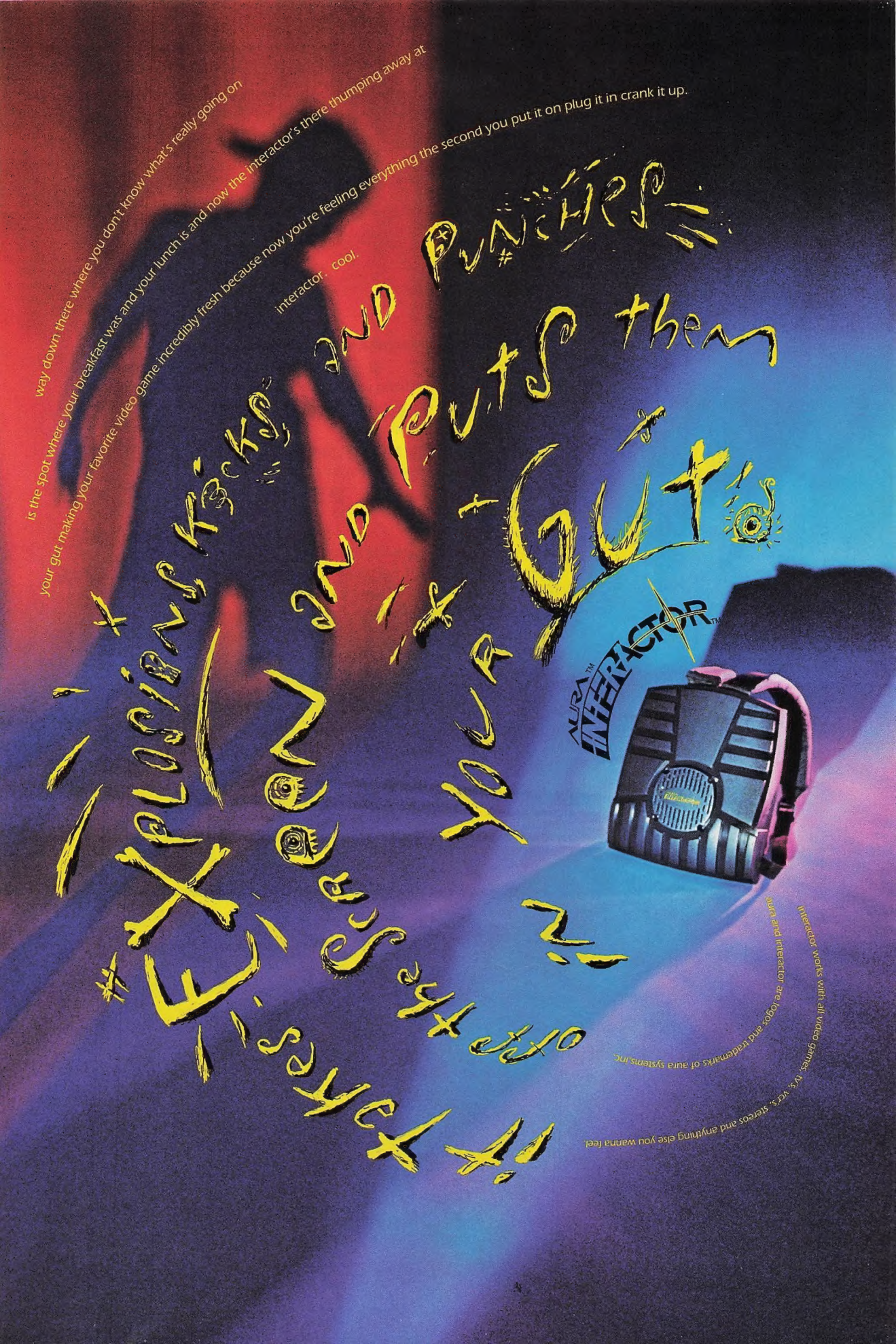

way down there where you don't know what's really going on
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TREMBLE WITH FEAR AND ENTER THESE EXCITING CONTESTS!

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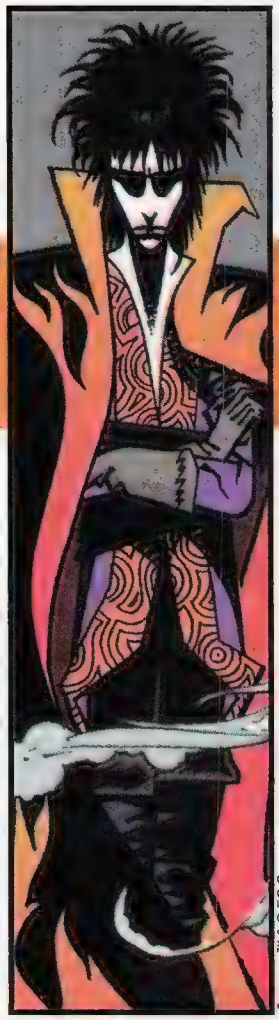
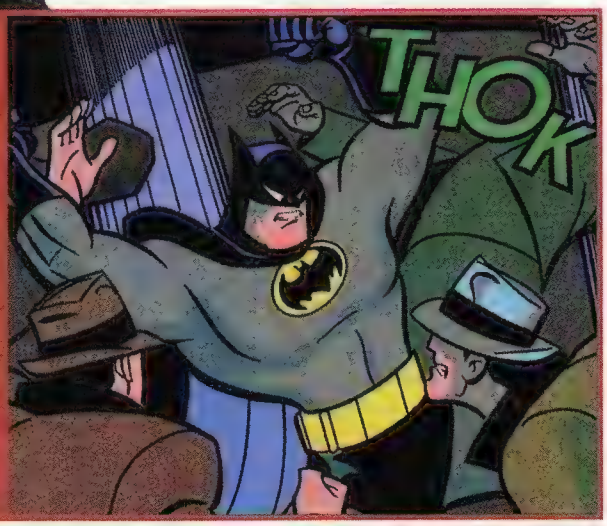
JOKER ™ & © DC COMICS



SANDMAN ™ & © DC COMICS

I am Sandman. Hear me roar. See page 38.



"All right, guys, knock it off! There's plenty of candy for everyone." What's the other Batman up to these days? Find out on page 86.

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If this bloody head entices you, then turn to page 104. Find it immoral and offensive? Go straight to page 92.

Magic Words

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And the Magic Number is...2,379

Let's talk about numbers. Better yet, let's talk about one number. The number I'd like to talk about is 2,379. It's a nice little number, evenly divisible by three. It's also the number of letters addressed to Magic Words we received over the last month. This represents a new *Wizard* all-time record, and yes, it's true—I still read every last one of those suckers. Think that's a lot of letters? You're right. It's very gratifying to know that there's a lot of people out there who read and enjoy the magazine, and the volume of letters we get tells us that. Keep 'em coming.

But (and you know there's always a but)—please do us, and yourself, a favor by ADDRESSING YOUR MAIL CORRECTLY! Magic Words seems to be kind of a catch-all category, and we receive lots of stuff there that really doesn't belong. Please—if you have a customer service letter, about something like a mangled subscription copy or a late *Gen*[13] #1/2, address that letter to "Customer Service." We do not run customer service letters here, and sending such a letter to Magic Words can delay fulfillment of your request by up to three weeks. Similarly, send Pen Pals to "Pen Pals" and price guide-related stuff to "Market Watchers."

Oh, yeah. I've got a tip for you Letter Art people, too. Take a look at the entries that win. They're always original pieces, not something directly copied from an existing piece of art. Hint, hint.

As for the letters this month, we had a lot of response to the whole issue of whether Spider-Man should have killed Carnage in the "Maximum Carnage" storyline to prevent him from killing others. We could have done an entire column on that.

We also received a lot of letters from people less than appreciative of our (oh...what to call it?) gentle ribbing of the Batman/Spawn crossover story. Our leadoff letter kind of sums it all up...

Dear Wizard,

You say both Spawn/Batman crossovers are lousy, but I say they are good. And I say that *Archie Meets the Punisher* is lousy.

Matt Krist
Farmington, MI

Just goes to show you that there's different strokes for different folks. The overwhelming majority of our letter writers really liked *Spawn/Batman* and *Batman/Spawn*. And I loved *Archie Meets the Punisher*.

On to those wacky Spidey letters. I'll reserve all comments until the end.

Dear Wizard,

I just finished reading Dan Elston's letter in *Wizard* #36. Our society must be pretty pitiful if someone has to ask why Spider-Man doesn't kill.

Mike Krause
Vassar, MI

Dear Wizard,

Current events influence fantasy. This is an irrefutable fact. All throughout history, people have wanted stories about things they couldn't do in reality. Given the average news report today, it's no wonder that the "tough guy, take no prisoners" hero has become so popular.

Take "Maximum Carnage," for example, where Spidey let Carnage escape rather than killing him. Could you imagine what the public reaction would have been if John Wayne Gacy had been sentenced to five years in a mental institution instead of being given the death penalty? Not that Spidey should become the Spid-isher, but I believe the next time Spidey sees another Carnage aftermath, he should at least question his beliefs. After all, if an everyday Joe saw something bad that could have been prevented, but if preventing it conflicted with his beliefs, he would question those beliefs.

Larry Schultz
Springville, NY

Dear Wizard,

This letter is in defense of the letter written by Dan Elston in the August 1994 issue of *Wizard*.

In his letter, Mr. Elston poses the question:

Why did Spider-Man repeatedly let Carnage go when he knew Carnage would kill again? Jim McLauchlin answered Mr. Elston by giving a big, happy, bleedin' heart speech about how Spider-Man is a Joe Average who doesn't kill people, and that makes him a hero.

Well, I've got something to say to all you Spider-Man freaks out there—Spider-Man is not the hero of heroes you thought he was. Spider-Man is a coward. Yeah, yeah, I know he goes out and beats the crap out of freaks and weirdos, but I don't care, because I know the truth—SPIDER-MAN IS A COWARD. All you Spidey fans out there are probably crappin' in your pants saying, "Oh no, it's someone bashing Spider-Man, the physical manifestation of heroism!"

But Spider-Man is a coward because he can't even sacrifice a little bit of his soul to kill an almost non-sentient, psychopathic slaughterer so that he will not murder any more innocents. A person that selfish is not a hero.

The Punisher is a hero. When sweet little Pete Parker is at home with that bimbo wife of his, Frank Castle is sacrificing the very fiber of his being to save innocents he doesn't even know. When the Punisher kills a drug dealer selling crack to kids, will that dealer sell again? No. When Spider-Man lets a killer go, will he kill again? It's already happened.

Maybe if there were some good editors on the Spider-Man books, then Spider-Man would have killed Carnage, and that story would be followed by a provocative tale about Peter Parker trying to deal with what he has done. But, of course, that won't happen unless Spider-Man is sold to a good company.

Ben Ziegler
Covington, LA

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Dear Wizard,

My letter covers two points brought up in the letter column of *Wizard* #36.

First, in response to John Rarwoski's letter asking for your advice on what comics to spend $100 on, your comment to buy 100 issues of *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos* was extremely facetious. *Wizard* and its staff have a responsibility to young readers. I worked for six years in a comic store and quite often was asked by customers to inform them of a good comic to invest in. I always told them to find something they enjoyed reading instead. But there were always kids that would press me further for advice, and I would recommend something that legitimately had a chance to go up in value. Never would I be so snide as to recommend buying *Sgt. Fury*, saying it was "the greatest comic series of all time" as you did.

I am on your side, however, in regards to your response to Dan Elston's letter about why Spider-Man didn't kill Carnage. Dan, it's getting harder and harder to tell the heroes from the villains. I've always been a Superman fan for the reason that he was a guy who could have done anything—ruled the world or destroyed it if he saw fit—but he chose to help people. That was a great influence on my personality as I was growing up. Now, it's getting to the point where it isn't enough that a hero kills somebody, it's how many he kills. Look at Hal Jordan or Sabretooth, for example.

And now I'll get off my soapbox. Thank you for giving me a forum to have my say. Have a nice day.

Peter Lewis Bosch
Hollywood, CA

First things first. My *Sgt. Fury* recommendation was not given facetiously. I worked in a comic store for five years, and if someone asked me what to invest in, I'd direct them to the nearest stockbroker. Yes, *Wizard* does have a responsibility to its readers, and I believe anyone who gives comic "investment advice" is acting irresponsibly. John Rarwoski didn't ask for an investment pick—he asked for a recommendation. I feel that *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos* is one of the finest comics of all time—there was nothing snide about the recommendation.

On to larger topics. We got a *lot* of mail regarding Spider-Man and whether or not he should have waxed Carnage's symbiote ass when he got the chance. In the interest of fairness, let me point out that the mail ran in favor of Spidey killing Carnage, but only by a very slight margin. But (and you know there's always a but) it would have been completely out of character for Spider-Man to have done the deed. I stick to my original answer, be it "big, happy, bleedin' heart" or not—Spider-Man

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender, and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words's address on page 14. Hey, make a friend!

Vincent Peeper
Age: 21 Sex: Male
HMH-362, MAG-26
MCAS New River
Jaxsonville, NC 28454
Likes: *Spawn*, Spider-Man titles, *Silver Surfer*

Jennifer Ayers
Age: 14 Sex: Female
54 Francis Ave.
Hamden, CT 06517
Likes: *X-Factor*, *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*

Rasmus Drews
Age: 17 Sex: Male
Bavnebjaergspark 81
3520 Farum
Denmark
Likes: Batman, *Spawn*, *Deathblow*

Peter Flores
Age: 16 Sex: Male
3955 Camino San Siemeon
Palm Springs, CA 92264
Likes: All Image titles, all Valiant titles, *Warriors of Plasm*

is Peter Parker and Peter Parker is not a killer.

I think Ben Ziegler is missing the point. Spider-Man is anything but a coward. The memory of his slain uncle keeps him going, putting his butt on the line on a daily basis for the common good. He learned the hard way that with his great power, there also comes great responsibility. He exercises that power, tempered with responsibility. I don't think that a one-man judge-jury-executioner with the power of Spider-Man would be a welcome addition to my neighborhood, or even the Marvel Universe. Justice should be meted out by the rule of the law, not the whim of a single person.

It's just one man's opinion, but I think Ben has the wrong idea about what constitutes a "hero." The Punisher certainly does not "sacrifice a little bit of his soul" in killing a drug dealer. That sits just fine with him. He has no qualms. I think it is the unwavering nature of Spider-Man's soul, and his refusal to bend for the sake of expedience, that qualifies him as a "hero." Lose sight of that, and you might turn out like this next guy...

Spider-Man ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Dear Wizard,

I was recently reading your Magic Words section in *Wizard* #36 when I came across a letter by a Mr. Michael Thomas Deely. He stated that with the onset of "dark heroes" (like Spawn), the idea of a "true hero" is dying. I have something to say about this: Classic heroes have not died because of unheroic characters in the 1990s. There is just NO SUCH THING as a hero. Oh, yes, Spawn was a killer in life, but he was a soldier: a man paid to kill by our government and then revered as a hero by the American people for a job well done.

Batman and Superman have both been called heroes, but all they did was beat the living hell out of super-villains and each other, plus destroy public and private property during their great battles. Very unheroic, if you ask me.

What I'm getting at is that comic book heroes today are just doing what the oldies before them did, only we've become more liberal and open about seeing blood splattered across comic pages. Hey, even a lot of history's most prominent legends and real-life heroes have killed people without remorse and were thought of as all the better for it. True heroism is something none of us really possesses; we only think we do.

So, Mr. Deely, my definition of a hero is the person who has enough courage to get up in the morning, go outside, and face this grim world we live in the best way he or she can. Remember the saying: "Kill one man, you're a murderer; kill many, you're a conqueror; kill them all, you're a god." If anyone can tell me the true meaning of a hero, I would be glad to hear it.

Philip Morgan
Justus, PA

And on a lighter note...

Dear Wizard,

I'm writing in response to Jake Francis's letter in *Wizard* #37. I agree that throwing regular playing cards like Gambit does would be impossible. I am a college graduate with some physics background (but by no means am I an expert). The key to throwing the cards successfully is Gambit's power of changing an object's potential energy to kinetic energy. Observing Newton's laws of motion, we know that unless acted upon by an outside force, an object at rest tends to stay at rest, while an object in motion tends to stay in motion. When Gambit "charges" an object, he is changing its potential energy (energy of rest) to kinetic energy (energy of motion).

When Remy throws the "charged" card, this

motion tends to continue until it hits something. The friction and wind resistance effects are negligible. One could say that this card has the same properties as a bullet. Anyway, this is just one theory. I'm sure there are many more out there.

Timothy R. Gabriel
Milton, FL

And who said higher education was a waste?

Gambit ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

To the Wizards at Wizard,

I have a few questions to ask.

1) Is the "Gen" in "Gen13" pronounced "gin" or "gene"?

2) If Lobo fought the Power Rangers, who do you think would win?

3) What is Vertigo?

Kevin Blalock
Indian Trail, NC

I have a few answers.

1) Neither. It's pronounced "Jen," as in Wizard staffer Jen Winheim.

2) Lobo. And it sure would be nice to see some Mighty Morphin' body parts go flyin'!

3) A DC Comics imprint, and only the coolest batch of comics around today.

Dear Wizards,

Who's your favorite person from *WKRP in Cincinnati*?

Andrew Lozano
Concord, CA

No doubt about it—Dr. Johnny Fever, who, along with the Blues Brothers and state troopers, is one of the few people on Earth allowed to wear sunglasses indoors.

It should be pointed out, however, that I did have a minor-league case of the hots for Bailey Quarters.

Dear Wizard:

As new issues of *Wizard* come out, the amount of information you print per series in the price guide decreases, presumably because the number of titles you must list is increasing. I'm requesting an increase in information. Have you considered publishing a book which lists the artist and writer for every single issue? If such a book already exists, how do I get

VALIANT HOUSE STYLE?
SEAN
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one? I'd buy it in a flash! It should also include stuff that doesn't appear in your guide, like *War is Hell* and *Black Goliath* and black-and-white magazines such as *Marvel Preview* and *Deadly Hands of Kung Fu*. You could save space by blowing off post-1991 X-titles, but that's another whole letter.

What I want is a source for compiling a bibliography on favorite writers. You've given me a tremendous amount of help already; how else would I have discovered that Chris Claremont wrote an issue of Marvel's *Defenders*? But I had to find out the hard way which issues of *Power Man and Iron Fist* he wrote, including an expensive lesson about checking credits before purchase, and it was by sheerest chance that I noticed his name in *Dr. Strange* #44.

I'm probably not the only collector who would find such a book useful. How about it?

Marilyn Kinch
Berkeley, CA

We weren't going to do it, but your heart-rending tale of the Claremont-scripted *Defenders* (#19—a great issue, by the way) has pushed us over the edge. Look for the *Wizard Press Comic Book Price Guide Annual* at a comic store near you in time for holiday gift-giving (subtle hint, subtle hint).

LUCIFER MORNINGSTAR ™ & © DC COMICS

Fellow Morpheus Followers,

Much discussion has popped up about the death of Morpheus, AKA the Sandman. Although we are not sure if he is going to die or not in the current "Kindly Ones" storyline, if he does, I know who will kill him. Look back to *Sandman* #4 (where he goes to Hell), page 23. After Morpheus leaves the crowd, Lucifer Morningstar says, "One day I shall destroy him." So if Morpheus dies, Lucifer Morningstar will be the one to destroy him.

Ben Kleinman
Cincinnati, OH

Maybe, maybe not. More likely candidates might be the Kindly Ones themselves. Check out *Sandman* #31. Desire, a bit miffed that one of his/her schemes against the Sandman went awry, vowed to make Morpheus spill family blood and "bring the Kindly Ones down on his blasted head." Now all we need to know is just who the Kindly Ones are.

Dear Wizard,

With all the talk about DC's *Zero Hour*, I find it difficult to believe that this was an original concept. Anyone who is (was?) a fan of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* would know about use of time warps and the like. On a few episodes there were "fluctuations" in the time continuum which really messed up the past, present, and future.

Dwight Chambers
Sacramento, CA

No, it's not an original concept. Time travel and time anomaly stories have been around as long as science fiction has. DC is no more "guilty" of using this idea than anyone else. See the next letter.

Dear All-Knowing Comic Gods,

In response to the praise you gave Jonathan Torres in issue #35 about his finding that science fiction is the inspiration for some comic books, I'd like to say that I know where Stan Lee & Jack Kirby got the idea for the X-Men (and maybe even Spidey)! A 1950s book called *The Crysalids* was about a post-nuclear world where radiation caused deformations, but anything outside the norm was considered a mockery in the face of God. Those deformed were shunned as deviations or mutants. A group of children found that they could communicate telepathically, and there was also a deviation with long arms called the "Spider-Man."

In addition, there was a movie released the same year as *X-Men* (vol.1) #1 called *X, The Man with X-Ray Eyes*, about a man cal led Dr. Xavier. Coincidence? Not bloody likely!

Jamie Crothall
Hanmer, Ontario, Canada

Hey, now that's cool! Anyone looking for other early "mutant" literature might also try Theodore Sturgeon's *More than Human*.

Dear Wizard,

Forget the X-Men vs. Iron Man crap!

Let my name go down in history, for I am the man who knows who the living Superman is! In a recent Superman issue, the heroes find Superman's body underneath his memorial.

So who is the dead Superman and who is the living Superman? Well, the Eradicator stated in the "Reign of the Supermen" story that Supes did in fact die. So the dead Superman is Kal-El (the original), and the living Superman is...Don-El, the mentally ill Kryptonian from Kandor, the Bottle City. He impersonated Supes in *Superman* #337. This is how Superman was able to defeat Doomsday, the being you can't beat twice, for a second time. Ask DC!

Kenny "Nuke 'Em" Duke
Roundhill, KY

We asked DC. It's a nice theory, but (and you know there's always a but) there's one problem. Says DC's Assistant Director of Marketing Communications (and possessor of the longest title I've ever seen) Maureen McTigue, "After John Byrne's 1986 *Man of Steel* rewrite, there is no Bottle City of Kandor, and thus no Don-El. But thanks for playing."

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Hey Wizard,

Why do I get an issue of *Wizard* months before the date on the cover?

Joe King
Redmond, WA

It's an old comic trick. Cover dates on magazines are actually "pull dates" which tell retailers when to take the mags off the shelf and send them back to the distributors. When December 1 hits, it's time to pull the December-dated issues. Most mags are dated one or two months in advance, but way back when, publishers started dating comics an extra month in advance in hopes of getting longer shelf life. That tradition continues today.

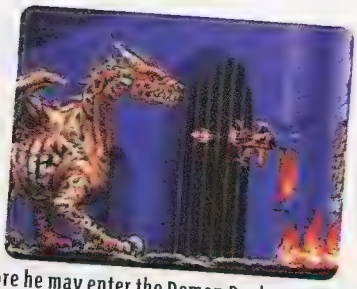
Dear Wizard,

In what order does the *Deathmate* crossover go? I've finally bought the whole set, and I am confused!

Kristopher Bair
Oklahoma City, OK

Maurice Aufourth Age: 18 Sex: Male 326 N. Palisade Santa Maria, CA 93454 Likes: *Savage Dragon, The Maxx, Spawn*	Hardrick M. Gulley Age: 19 Sex: Male 827 N. Central Ave. Rockford, IL 61101 Likes: *Spawn*, Venom, Sabretooth	Christian Williams Age: 13 Sex: Female 5512 Westhaven Dr. Fort Worth, TX 76132 Likes: *Uncanny X-Men, Shaman's Tears, Wolverine*	Eloy Garcia Age: 12 Sex: Male 3912 Ramsey Corpus Christi, TX 78415 Likes: *Wolverine, X-Men, Spawn*	Jesse Stutzman Age: 13 Sex: Male 1018 E. 4th St. Ogallala, NE 69153 Likes: *Spawn, Solar, Shadowman*	John Gonglievski Age: 14 Sex: Male 207 Prynn St. Peckville, PA 18452 Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, Spawn, Cyberforce*	Tom Chin Age: 13 Sex: Male 9418 E. Star Water Dr. Tuscon, AZ 85749 Likes: *Prime*, all Image titles	Ethan Netterstrom Age: 14 Sex: Male 9232 Hamlin Des Plaines, IL 60016 Likes: *Sandman, Black Orchid*, X-titles

In the graveyard, Firebrand must bust through Belth's claw to recover the Crest of Fire.



Before he may enter the Demon Realm, Firebrand must confront Somulo, the dragon gatekeeper.

ALL HELL IS ABOUT TO BREAK LOOSE.

Your spine will tingle as you enter the terrifying Ghoul Realm, where the evil Phalanx has hidden the magical, powerful stones of the Demon's Crest in his plot to form a destructive empire. Their return is up to you and Firebrand, a flame-spitting gargoyle who morphs into unique and powerful forms—each with startling attacks and powers. To restore peace, you must conquer Phalanx and his minions on seven treacherous levels by collecting weapons, gems and treasures. It's a hell of a way to have fun.

CAPCOM

Firebrand morphs into the Tidal Gargoyle, in an effort to shoot the Holoturion snail.

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Ask the WIZARD

Q: If Gambit charged his fist and punched somebody, would his hand blow off?

—A. Antonacci, Austin, Texas

A: *He can't charge living tissue (or tissue belonging to a dead creature, for that matter).*

Q: Why isn't there a Bionic Woman comic book?

—J. Mashia, Portland, Ore.

A: *Because there aren't any Bionic Woman fans. (Actually, Charlton published a five-issue series from 1977-78. Go nuts.)*

Q: If the Human Torch was on fire, and he passed wind, would a fireball shoot out of his butt, since farts are flammable?

—D. Dewing, Dallas, Ore.

A: *It would depend a lot on what Johnny had for dinner the night before. If it was a fart resulting from a plate of Moo Goo Gai Pan, a side order of broccoli and two cups of coffee, he'd blow a hole in his shorts, torch half of Central Park, and end up in orbit. (And we don't wanna even think about what his colon would look like.)*

Q: If Nightcrawler was playing hockey and slapshoted the puck from his blue line, then teleported past the other blue line, would it be an offsides call, a two-line pass, or what?

—R. Jimenez, Nesconset, NY

A: *It would be a two-line pass, but the referee would call a penalty, and the puck would be brought back behind Nightcrawler's first blue line for a face-off.*

WIZARD wonders...

Is Plastic Man recyclable?

Ask the Pros

Hey, Todd McFarlane...
"What would happen if you splashed Spawn with holy water?"

—J. Ramirez, Wapato, Wash.

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

Have a question that's bugging the heck out of you and that no one can answer? Heck, the Wizard can answer anything. Just send your stumpers to Ask the Wizard, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

It went like this: *Prologue, Yellow, Blue, Red, Black, Epilogue.* It appears the six books were colored instead of numbered, so that if one was late, readers wouldn't get confused, and could still read the others, which featured self-contained stories, in any order they pleased. With the colors, you didn't have to feel weird about reading *Red* before *Blue*, get it? Unfortunately, *Red* and *Black* shipped so late that the crossover got screwed up anyway.

Dear Wizard,

My brother Jimmy calls your CBIQ's "quizzies." What would he call them if they were CBIT's?

Donald Quintana
Pomona, CA

"Quitties?"

Dear Sirs,

In *Wizard* #34, you printed a letter reading:

"Dear Sirs,

Death to all Roman pigs. Thank you."

You probably know this, but I just wanna make sure. In *X-O Manowar* #0, after watching his parents get murdered, Aric of Dacia swore an oath to kill all "Roman pigs." Your response to this letter had something to do with Monty Python, but it probably should have been about *X-O Manowar*. I kind of figure that you know what you're doing, but I wrote this letter so I'd have an excuse to draw on an envelope.

Jeremy Rose
Apex, NC

Heck, I had no idea. Thanks for clearing that up, Jeremy.

SILVER SAMURAI ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Dear Wizard,

Has Silver Samurai ever won a fight? He seems to get his butt beaten by every Joe in town.

Nic Reuting
Omaha, NE

Yeah, what a wuss. I've never seen him win a fight either! He's gotten his butt whupped by Spider-Man, the Black Widow, Wolverine, Shang-Chi—Master of Kung-Fu— and even the New friggin' Mutants! I think he even got beat up by Charlie Brown once. And if he didn't, maybe that should be another inter-company crossover—*Silver Samurai vs. Charlie Brown.*

Dear Wizard,

I bought a DC/Marvel Batman/Punisher comic book. I paid $4.95 for it. I would like to know if its value is more or less.

Jason Willhite
Knifley, KY

Yeah, more or less.

Dear Wizard,

How do the X-Men get into their costumes?

Brian Elliott
Kingston, TN

One leg at a time.

Dear Wizard,

If Batman and the Hulk fought, who would win?

Samantha Johnson
West Palm Beach, FL

Hulk smash puny human. End of story.

BANSHEE ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Dear Wizard,

I'm having an argument with two of my friends. They say Banshee's real name (Sean Cassidy) is pronounced like "Scene." I say it's pronounced like "Shawn." Please tell them I'm right by printing this, or I'll tear out your gall bladder.

Greg Day
Dyersburg, TN

You're right—it's pronounced "Shawn." As for my gall bladder, give it a shot if you think you're man enough. Just try it and I'll give you a kidney punch so hard you won't be able to bend at the waist for two weeks.

Dear Wizard,

Wouldn't it be cool if Marshal Law kicked the crap out of Barney, Barbie, Archie, the Care Bears, and Mariah Carey, and then Punisher tried to kill Marshal Law, but Law kicked his ass?

Zach Schwartz
Larchmont, NY

Y'know, come to think of it, it would!

Dear Wizard,

Ever let a squirrel run free in your pants?

Ian Fortey
London, Ontario, Canada

Every day at 3 p.m. You can set your watch by it.

Comic Book Genius People,

I was wondering if you know of any available comic books about some guy or chick or thing who listens to Throbbing Gristle and kills people all the time just for kicks? I'm looking for something extremely bloody and graphic that will make me laugh at least as hard as the beginning of the *Wild at Heart* movie, the fatalities in *Mortal Kombat II*, or the X-rated version of *A Clockwork Orange*. Some bondage wouldn't hurt either.

Shoshana Levin
San Jose, CA

Gee, Shoshana, nothing really springs to mind, but I think I can steer you in the right direction. Just go down to your local hospital and find the psychiatric unit. Describe, in as great detail as you can, just what you're looking for to one of the nice, friendly people who work there. I'm sure they'll be able to help you. They may even have a comic for you right there on the spot. If they do, I'm sure they'll give you a nice room to wait in while they find it, with neat padded walls and everything. And don't wear a belt. They'll just take it away from you.

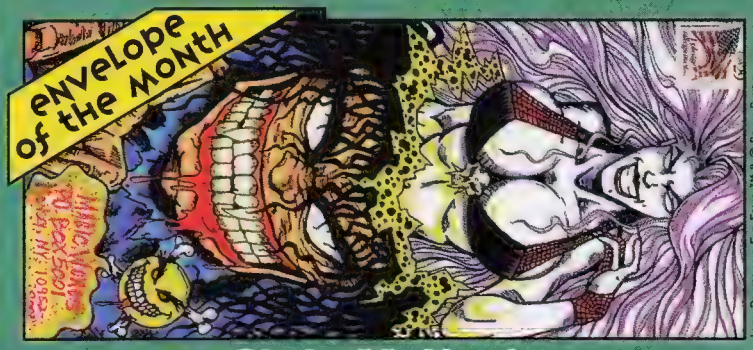
On that note, it's definitely time for me to leave. I think I hear my mother calling me.

Jim McLauchlin, editor on our companion publication, Collector's Sportslook, *has just gots ta know: Does ya like hamburgers? Does ya? Does ya?*

Send your letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

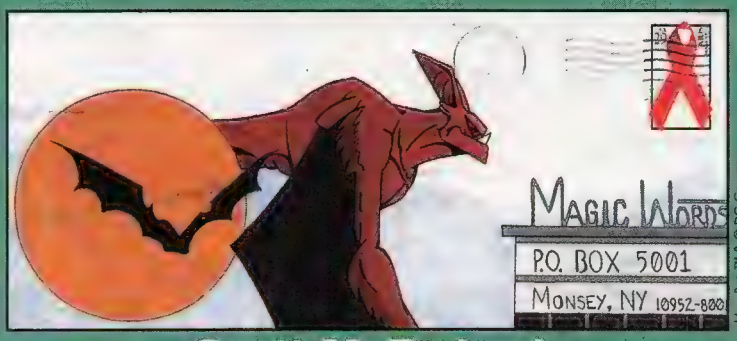
Enveloping LETTER ART!

When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and *boom*, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your envelope gets printed, you'll become a household name and you'll start dating the likes of Chris O'Donnell or Michelle Forbes (or both, if you like). Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of *Midnight Sons* #1 signed by Adam Kubert, a copy of *The Maxx* #2, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the *Wizard* creative staff, and a nifty *Wizard* baseball cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff *plus* a *Marvels* #4 signed by Alex Ross and a *Hulk* #418 signed by Peter David. Please include a clearly printed return address on the back of your envelope.



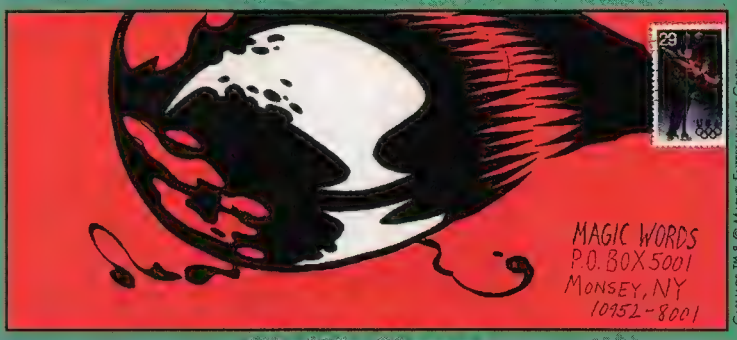
Lady Death and Evil Ernie ™ & © Brian Pulido

Chris McHugh
Aurora, Colo.



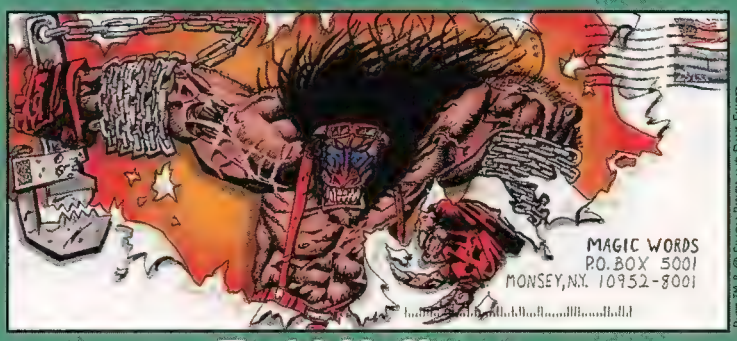
Man-Bat ™ & © DC Comics

Scott McFarland
Tyngsboro, Mass.



Carnage ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Keith Iteya
Los Angeles, Calif.



Blitz ™ & © Simon Bisley and Dave Elliott

Todd Huffman
Crawfordsville, Ind.

In the year 2026, things get thug-ly when bionic gang Scumocide tries to take over the entire universe. Captain Commando and his posse–Baby Head, Ginzu the Ninja and Mack the Knife–are up for the fight with a futuristic arsenal including the energy glove, knee rocket and subsonic knives. And huge moves like the Captain Kick, Flying Katana and Rolling Punch. In this straight

COMMIT SCUMOCIDE.

from the arcade hit, one or two players must commit Scumocide. Or face the end of all existence.

Baby Head better give his knee rocket launcher a quick charge before battling Yamato.

Captain Commando puts out the lights of the Electric Lady with his arm cannon.

Mack the Knife and Ginzu the Ninja use their "bandage whip, slice and dice combo" on some Scum.

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WIZARD NEWS

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Prof. X is scheduled to bite the big one—as evidenced by the above carnage—in the new X-Men storyline, "After Xavier: The Rise of Apocalypse," beginning in December.

X-MEN NO MORE

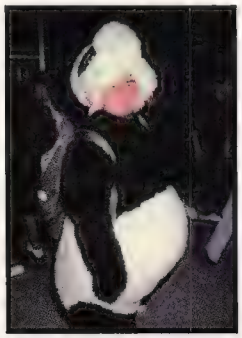
The rumors are true. In December, **Marvel Comics** is canceling all of its **X-Men** titles, and then relaunching all-new mutant titles, beginning with #1, in January. In December, **Prof. Charles Xavier** will be murdered 20 years before he founds the X-Men, which will change the course of events that make up the present Marvel Universe.

The storyline, titled "After Xavier: The Age of Apocalypse," will begin in December's ***X-Men: Alpha #1*** and will present the X-titles with radical new directions. Taking ***X-Men***'s place in January will be ***Mutants: The Amazing X-Men***, where readers join Magneto and his team of mutants. January's ***Uncanny X-Men*** will become ***Mutants: The Astonishing X-Men***, where Magneto and his wife, Rogue, tend to their young son. ***Wolverine*** becomes ***Weapon X***, where we meet the most dangerous mutant team of all: Logan and Jean Grey! ***X-Factor*** becomes ***Factor X***, where Cyclops betrays his father, Mr. Sinister. ***Excalibur*** continues as ***X-Calibre***, in which readers will witness Nightcrawler and Mystique embarking on a quest for the woman called Destiny. ***X-Force*** mutates into ***Gambit and the X-Ternals***, where Gambit and his lover, Lila Cheney, begin the biggest jewel heist of all: the M'Kraan crystal. ***Generation X*** becomes ***Mutants: Generation Next***, where Colossus and his wife, Kitty Pryde, discover that his long-lost sister is in the slave pits. ***X-Men Unlimited*** transforms into ***X-Men Chronicles***, where readers witness how Magneto formed The Mutants. ***Cable*** becomes ***X-Man***, where someone has escaped from the clone banks—Nathan Christopher Summers.

As for when, and if, the regular X-titles will resurface, Marvel Publicity Manager **Gary Guzzo** is not commenting.

Photos: Al Ortega

Local comic con draws excited showing of one fan. "See? The comic market isn't dead," said vibrating show promoter with lots of copies of Tribe *#1.*



"Aaargh! Who slipped me the horse laxative?! Somebody get me outta here, this suit's fillin' up fast!!" gurgled victim of cruel prank.

Spider-Man & Wolverine ™ & © Marvel Superheroes ™ & © DC Comics.

Post-Zero Hour DC Comics introduces new characters, including "Spider-Fellow" and "Wolverine-Man." "Hey!" replied Marvel spokesperson.

EXTREME Termination

In the current ongoing crop of books published by Image Comics's Extreme Studios, there's a storyline which will lead to the mass termination of all but four Extreme titles.

In the storylines leading up to, and including, January's "Extreme Sacrifice," major events which could not be disclosed will affect every Extreme character and title, seemingly forever. While Extreme's mini-series like *Youngblood: Year One* and *The Legend of Supreme* will continue, its ongoing titles in February will be pared down to four: *Prophet* by Stephen Platt, *Knightmare* by Jeff Matsuda, *Mark* (based on the character from a future Tom Cruise film) with art by an artist to be announced, and *Supreme* by Rob Liefeld. All will start anew with a #1 issue. A later addition will be *Bloodpool*, based on the FBI training grounds for Youngblood members, with a creative team to be announced.

Matt Hawkins, Extreme marketing guy, says, "This is the storyline we've been building up to for over two years now. We openly admit it's a severe storyline with severe ramifications. After all, what'd you expect from a place called Extreme?"

LIEFELD Forms MAXIMUM PRESS

Last month, Image Comics co-founder **Rob Liefeld** made an announcement that may have sounded vaguely familiar. He's starting a comic book company, and planning to publish all by himself. Only this time, he means *all* alone.

"**Maximum Press** is owned solely by me," states Rob. "It has nothing to do with Image Comics." The six-issue mini-series ***Warchild*** is the imprint's first offering, continuing the tale of "Sword and Stone," first seen in *Wizard #23*, to be drawn by **Chap Yaep**. "It's a sword and sorcery, science fiction epic in the same vein as [the films] *Highlander* or *Star Wars*," says **Matt Hawkins**, Extreme and Maximum Press Marketing VP, "but outside of the traditional superhero fare."

"When you have a shared universe with so many other people, there are certain things that you just can't do," Hawkins contends. Liefeld agrees. "If I were to publish *Warchild* within Extreme," he explains, "it would be assumed that it relates to the Image Universe. It doesn't. I want to publish stuff that has nothing to do with superheroes. If I publish as Maximum Press, I have the chance to break the stereotype of what a 'Rob Liefeld product' is, or what an 'Extreme Studios product' is. And I'm going to. *Warchild* is the best thing that Extreme has done."

Warchild is slated for December, and, according to Hawkins, next is the ongoing series ***Black Flag***, another SF-fantasy tale. A creator-owned character by **Dan Fraga**, the original Image one-shot was the only black-and-white book the company's published. Beyond that, westerns, romances, and more SF comics have been mentioned. "I wouldn't necessarily do them," Liefeld clarifies, "but I'd publish them. I'm developing a line of books created and written by women. So far, no big comics names are involved, but you never know."

Whether Maximum Press means Liefeld is leaving Image—as he hinted an Image founder might be doing next year in his column in *Entertainment Retailing #14*—is doubtful. "If I was pulling out of Image, you'd know it," laughs Liefeld. "There would be a ticker tape parade and jets streaking across the sky. I don't do anything in a small fashion."

"Maximum Press is a great idea," says **Beau Smith**, Image marketing director. "And we're happy about it. Rob's always wanted to broaden comics to genres other than superheroes, and that's exactly what Maximum Press is going to do. That'll benefit everyone. It'll grow the audience base, and that helps the whole industry."

"We can introduce a whole generation of comic book readers to a genre of comics they may have never read before," says Hawkins. "There's a lot of non-superhero stuff out there that sucks. I think it'll be interesting to come out with a non-superhero book that doesn't."

—Ruth Morrison

™ & © Maximum Press

Warchild is the first offering from Rob Liefeld's Maximum Press.

DARK SUPREME: YEAR ONE

Legend of Supreme, a darker, more horrifying take on the **Image Comics** character, begins its initial book arc in December.

"We didn't just go in with a shovel and start shifting things around and beating things into the earth," says writer **Keith Giffen**, who, with penciler **Jeff Johnson**, pilots the fortunes of the first three *Legend Of Supreme* monthly installments. "We've just played around with the origin and sort of fleshed it out."

Giffen, who says *Legend of Supreme* evolved earlier this year out of an offer to "give Supreme a different voice," reports that the initial storyline is "kind of like *Citizen Kane*."

"There is a reporter who says, 'This Supreme thing all sounds too pat,' and she begins digging into his background," says Giffen. "As she digs, she discovers that what we know about the origin of Supreme and what we know about him is kind of the truth, but a lot has been hidden and swept under the rug. She continues to dig, and what she finds out turns out to be one of the great nightmares of her life."

The first three books consist of flashbacks to the young Supreme, World War II, some of the defining moments of his life, and, according to Giffen, "the real reason why he left Earth.

"This will be a darker book than the original *Supreme*," offers the writer. "It veers off into horror real fast. Let's face it, the guy is twisted. This book will address what it was that made him this way. It's an element of the character that people seem to turn away from. I decided to just approach it head on."

Legend of Supreme will run concurrently with the initial incarnation of *Supreme*, which began its run in 1992, and will restart with issue #1 early next year.

—Marc Shapiro

WIZARD looks back...

Marvel's Tales

New comic readers may have heard the titles *Strange Tales, Tales to Astonish,* and *Tales of Suspense* in connection with Marvel Comics's upcoming painted comics of those names, but vintage comic collectors know those titles for their historical significance. These three series played an important part in the formation of the Marvel Universe.

The story of these titles begins with Marvel's original Tales title, *Marvel Tales.* More than a decade before the title was used on the series of Spider-Man reprints, *Marvel Tales* became Marvel's first horror anthology, replacing the superhero title *Marvel Mystery Comics* and continuing its numbering beginning with #93 in 1949.

The horror format did well, and in 1951 Marvel followed up with the horror anthology *Strange Tales.* Also successful, *Strange Tales* was followed by *Uncanny Tales* and *Menace.* Most of these were short-lived, thanks to the introduction of the Comics Code Authority in 1954, which was created in part as a reaction to the public furor over these and other horror titles. In fact, at the U.S. Senate subcommittee hearings held that year to address concerns over the effects of comics on juvenile delinquency, a Marvel representative was questioned about the horrific contents of an issue of *Strange Tales.*

Despite this notoriety, *Strange Tales* was one of the few Marvel titles to survive this era. It did so by changing its format to include science fiction/mystery stories, and it eventually featured the giant monsters for which the Marvel comics of this period are famous. Titles such as *Tales to Astonish* and *Tales of Suspense* (both started in 1959) were added to chronicle the exploits of these monsters as well.

Beginning with *Fantastic Four* #1 in 1961, superheroes regained the spotlight at Marvel, and most existing Marvel titles were converted to superhero titles. *Strange Tales* began featuring the FF's Human Torch with issue #101 (often pairing him with his teammate, The Thing); *Tales of Suspense* introduced Iron Man in #39; and Ant-Man debuted in *Tales to Astonish* #27, set to star regularly with #35 of the title.

The popularity of Marvel's superheroes continued to increase throughout the '60s, and the Tales titles eventually featured two heroes in each issue. *Strange Tales* introduced Doctor Strange (in #110) and converted war vet Nick Fury into an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. (in #135). *Tales to Astonish* ran stories of the Hulk (beginning with #60) and later the Sub-Mariner (starting in #70), and *Tales of Suspense* began featuring Captain America (with #59) in addition to Iron Man.

The era of the Tales titles came to a close in 1968, when a new distribution deal allowed Marvel to increase the number of titles it was publishing. Since each Tales title was featuring two superhero serials, the company decided to split each book into two solo titles. Thus, *Strange Tales* converted to *Doctor Strange* with issue #169, and Nick Fury received a new title. Incidentally, Marvel tried to relaunch *Strange Tales* with a #1 issue in 1987, starring Dr. Strange and Cloak & Dagger, without success. *Tales of Suspense* was renamed *Captain America* with issue #100, and *Iron Man* began with an all-new #1 issue. *Tales to Astonish* became *The Incredible Hulk* with issue #102, spinning Namor into his own series.

In name, the Tales titles ended at this point, but because of the role they played during Marvel's formative years, these titles still evoke the classic era of the Marvel Universe.

—W.A.C. & M.S.

DEATH of Clark Kent

After killing **Superman**, what can you do for an encore? Kill him again! Well, sort of. In a story arc beginning in *Superman* #100, shipping in March, editor **Mike Carlin** and his team of super-creators will explore the ramifications of **"The Death of Clark Kent."**

According to information in a DC Comics press release, in that issue, Superman will come to realize his greatest fear: "the deduction of his secret identity by one of his most deadly foes. The subsequent endangerment of family and friends" leads to the demise of his alter ego.

Naturally, this leads to all sorts of questions—most of which the Superman writers were unwilling to give straight answers to. For instance, how does Clark die? "I have a pretty good idea how he dies," answers **Dan Jurgens**, writer/artist of the *Superman* title. "But death can mean a lot of different things in comics."

And if Clark is gone, will Superman still have a private life, a secret identity? **David Michelinie**, writer of *Action Comics*, skirts the question by saying, "We talked about Superman attempting any number of ways of dealing with this—both trying to create a new civilian identity and/or costumed identity. Anything is possible."

Both writers admit that the death could put a hitch in any marriage plans for Lois and Clark, though Jurgens notes it's likely to be a strange wedding anyway, if it ever happens. "Obviously, when you talk about a wedding with Superman, you're talking about a wedding with three people anyway: Superman, Clark Kent, and Lois Lane," he notes.

Michelinie acknowledges that the wedding is pretty much on hold for a while, anyway. "There are big plans for Lois; something happens in *Action* #710 [also in March] which will affect the engagement and the wedding. The wedding is pretty much put off while the TV series is going."

Ah, yes, the TV series. With a network show with his name in the title, can fans really expect the comic book Clark Kent to stay dead? "There's a tremendous amount of affection for Clark Kent; he's sort of like an icon," Michelinie points out. "If I was a betting man, I'd go with history and say that Clark will be back, but I can't say for sure."

Jurgens argues that these may all be the wrong questions, anyway. "If Superman suddenly believed a high-caliber villain knew he was Clark Kent, what would he have to do? If Clark dies, what about all the people who knew and loved Clark? It's a different situation from the world and its relationship with Superman. The magic of the storyline is not just what happens to Clark Kent, but what happens to the entire Superman family along the way."

Michelinie sums it all up by speculating, "Maybe we'll find out it's really the Clark Kent clone."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Clark Kent™ & © DC Comics

"Ah, but to lead a normal life, away from the whims of sales-hungry editors..." Clark Kent bites it in Superman *#100.*

Silvestri's Keeping Top Cow

Image Comics co-founder **Marc Silvestri**, contrary to our *Wizard* promotion in issue #39, is keeping the name **Top Cow Productions** for his corporate headquarters and entertainment-related division. It is for the artistic section of his company that he wishes to have a new name, hence #39's contest for the fans to designate a new name. However, many readers read this to mean Silvestri is giving up on Top Cow and leaving Image, which is completely untrue. *Wizard* apologizes for any misunderstanding.

Top Cow Logo ™ & © Top Cow Productions

The Top Cow name and logo is here to stay.

WIZARD a No-Go

Wizard Press President Gareb Shamus announced that *Wizard* will not participate in the Great Eastern Convention's Philadelphia Comic Book Show, scheduled for October. *Wizard* apologizes for any inconvenience that its lack of participation may cause.

CORMAN Turns to B Comics

Roger Corman, "King of the B Pictures," promises his new Cosmic Comics "will feature the same aggressive style as my early films." Considering that Corman directed such classic, defining movies of the 1950s as *Faster Pussycat, Kill Kill* and *Little Shop of Horrors*, that's promising a lot, so B movie fans are just trembling with anticipation at the thought of the March launch of the King's own comic book line, Roger Corman's Cosmic Comics.

Heading up the new offshoot of Concorde Pictures is editor Robert Boyd, who previously edited for Dark Horse Comics and Fantagraphics Books. Marcus Bastida of Concorde will serve as publisher for Cosmic Comics.

Cosmic Comics will release its first issue in March with the title *Death Race 2020*, a comic book sequel to the 1975 classic Corman film *Death Race 2000*. *Welcome to the Little Shop of Horrors*, based on another Corman classic, will be published in April, and the film adaptation of *The Wasp Woman* will hit the stands in May.

Other film adaptations, *Carnosaur* and Bram Stoker's *Burial of the Rats*, are being considered, but a Corman spokesman indicates that, as Cosmic Comics grows, titles featuring film-adaptable original characters will be published.

—M.S.

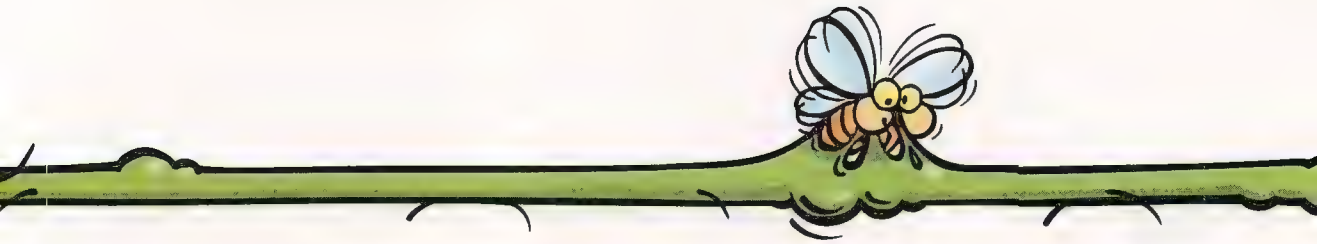
Friends of Lulu Elects Steering Committee

The term "fanboy" may become passé if the **Friends of Lulu** have their say. At the recent San Diego Comic Convention, the organization of approximately 30 women set up a number of goals: to increase female readership of comics, promote the work of women in comics, improve the working environment for women in comics, and offer networking opportunities and support.

The members of Friends of Lulu (named for the title character in the *Little Lulu* comic books) at the Convention elected a six-person steering committee consisting of Egmont Publishing writer/editor **Anina Bennett**, Night Flight Comics co-owner **Mimi Cruz**, Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards administrator **Jackie Estrada**, CompuServe comic book and animation forum assistant system operator **Cheryl Harris**, *Disney Adventures* senior comics editor **Heidi MacDonald**, and Angry Isis Press Publishing Coordinator **Liz Schiller**. They further decided to keep the general membership open to all who share the organization's goals.

For more information or to get on their mailing list, write Friends of Lulu, PO Box 691446, West Hollywood, CA 90069.

—Hank Bordowitz



The Godwheel TURNS

Malibu Comics will launch 1995 with one of its most epic Ultraverse storylines to date: ***Godwheel***, a four-issue weekly mini-series that will feature both top characters from the Ultraverse and top talent from the comic book industry.

But unlike Malibu's previous Ultraverse saga, *Break-Thru*, *Godwheel* will not run as a crossover but as an entirely self-contained mini-series, starting with issue #0 and climaxing in issue #3. The series will not interrupt the regular run of any Ultraverse title, but may affect the storylines of some of the main characters in its aftermath.

According to Malibu marketing teamster **Ross Richie**, *Godwheel* features major turning points for characters like the Freex, Warstrike, Elven, and Mantra. It also features one of the Ultraverse's flagship characters, Hardcase, along with the villainy of Rune.

Some of the Ultraverse's most popular villains will also figure into the tale, including

LORD PUMPKIN ™ & © MALIBU COMICS ENTERTAINMENT

Lord Pumpkin will be featured in the *Godwheel* series.

COMPANY UPDATES

ARCHIE COMICS

Shipping November 15 is *Archie's Love Showdown Special*, an aftermath of the love triangle between Archie, Betty, and Veronica. Now, though, it seems as if a mysterious third party is duking it out for Archie's affections...December collects the entire "Love Showdown" story, which ran in *Archie* #429, *Betty* #19, *Betty & Veronica* #82, and *Veronica* #39.

ARIA PRESS

Coming in December is *A Distant Soil: Knights of the Angel Deluxe*, a 120-page full-color graphic novel, which contains the original material later adapted in *ADS* #3-#11. Look for it at $19.95.

DARK HORSE

Star Wars: Dark Empire II #1 ships in December by the same team that brought you the first series: Tom Veitch and Cam Kennedy...In January, Frank Miller and Geof Darrow's *Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* #1 (of 2) will ship. It will be under the Legend banner...Also, look for Miller and Dave Gibbons's *Happy Birthday, Martha Washington* one-shot for early '95...John Byrne's *Babe* will also return in a new mini-series in mid-'95, as will Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*...March at Dark Horse is "Manga Month," with the spotlight on *Domu* by Katsuhiro Otomo (*Akira*), *The Ghost in the Shell* by Masamune Shirow (*Appleseed*), and *Spirit of Wonder* by Kenji Tsuruta...Matt Wagner will once again return to the Grendel known as Hunter Rose in 1995's *The Untold Tales of Hunter Rose*, in which Wagner will write eight-page stories for other artists in this anthology mini-series...In fall '95, the *Indiana Jones and the Sargosso Pirates* mini-series will ship, with story and art by Karl Kesel, and covers by Alex Ross.

DC COMICS

DC is handling the comic book adaptation of the December *Street Fighter* movie, starring Jean Claude Van Damme...With Barry Kitson leaving the penciling chores on *Adventures of Superman*, Stuart Immonen (*Legion of Super-Heroes*) will take over as regular artist. Lee Moder (*Wonder Woman*), in turn, has replaced Immonen on *LSH*.

HARRIS COMICS

Shipping in December is

Boneyard from *Mantra*, and **Lord Pumpkin** from *Sludge*. Malibu will also treat fans to darker versions of some of its more popular Ultraverse characters, including one villain called **Necromantra** and another called **Primevil**.

In addition to combining characters, the series will also combine the talents of some of the Ultraverse's main creators, as well as several fan-favorite surprise artists. *Mantra* writer **Mike Barr** has co-plotted the overall series and scripted issue #3, while *Hardcase* writer **James Hudnall** and *Solitaire* writer **Gerard Jones** will respectively handle issues #1 and #2. *Rune*'s **Chris Ulm**, and **Dan Danko**, Malibu's editor for the series, will script issue #0.

Malibu will split the books artistically, with the first half of each book handled by a still-secret lineup of top industry veterans, and the second half of each book handled by Ultraverse regulars such as **John Statema**, **Scott Benefiel**, **Jason Armstrong**, **Scott Kolins**, and **Aaron Lopresti**.

Several follow-up mini-series will spin off from *Godwheel*, including a Lord Pumpkin/Necromantra "flip-book" done in the same style as *Ultraverse Premiere*, and a spotlight mini-series for the *Premiere* character Elven, a female counterpart to the character Prime. The *Godwheel* story will also lead into the four-issue mini-series ***The Strike***, featuring Danko's Warstrike character, whose own regular title turns into a series of mini-series after *Giant-Size Warstrike* #1.

—Andrew Steven Harris

***Vampirella* #0, a story which bridges the "Morning in America" saga and the original color Harris ongoing series. Look for the Joe Quesada cover.**

IMAGE COMICS

In December, *Codename: Strykeforce* #10 heralds the new team of writer Steve Gerber and penciler Billy Tan, while *Cyberforce Origins Special: Cyblade*, has a story by Marc Silvestri and art by Joe Benitez...February's *Cyberforce Origins Special* spotlights Stryker, while Velocity launches into her own four-issue mini-series courtesy of Kurt Busiek and Rick Leonardi...Ripclaw gets his own mini-series in March by Eric Silvestri and Brandon Peterson... The anticipated ongoing *Weapon Zero* #1, by Walt Simonson and Benitez, ships in April; this one tells what *really* happened when astronauts first landed on the moon...June sees *The Darkness* #1, a new ongoing series written by Ann Nocenti with an artist yet to be determined...Black Anvil gets his own four-issue mini-series in July...Also in January is the *Youngblood* trade paperback, which reprints *Youngblood* #1-#5, with #1 being completely redialogued.

LIGHTNING COMICS

Lightning is returning from its hiatus in December with *DeathMark* #1, about an ex-con-turned-government agent who's out to kill War Party.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

The three-issue *Razor: Burn* series, starting in December, will feature color for the first time, courtesy of Jackhammer.

MALIBU COMICS

Coming in December is *BattleTech: Fall Out*, an all-new ongoing series based on the fully interactive video game. The series will be written by Roland Mann and illustrated by Tim Eldred.

MIRAGE STUDIOS

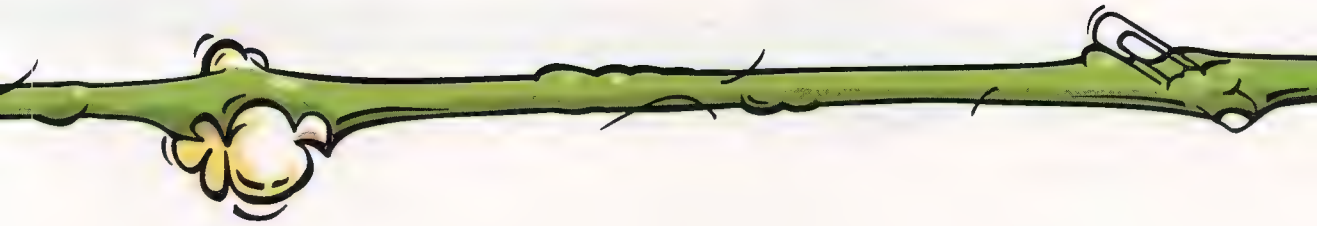
***Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* Vol. 2 #8 in November, will return the teens to a monthly schedule.**

TOPPS COMICS

Shipping in December is the *Mars Attacks* trade paperback, reprinting the five-issue mini-series, along with an all-new back-up story and cover by John Bolton.

VALIANT

***The Visitor* #1 ships in December, starring Valiant's mysterious new hero...*Destroyer* #0 has the character shed his Solar identity, and take measures to establish himself as the dominant power of the 41st Century.**



DEFIANT Halts Operations

Defiant, started by Jim Shooter in February 1993, announced the cessation of publishing operations as of August 31, 1994. Issues of *Dogs of War* and *Warriors of Plasm* that came out the previous week were the company's final publications. All freelancers and employees were reportedly paid before the announcement was made.

The possible demise of Defiant had been the source of speculation in the industry for several months, and rumors were fueled by Shooter's failure to attend the San Diego Comic Convention in early August. In fact, Shooter was meeting with a possible new financial partner, a major film studio, according to Clark Smith, Defiant's director of marketing and sales. Smith declined to name the studio, but reported that $3 million in new financing had fallen through.

WARRIORS OF PLASM ™ & © EEP, L.P.

Warriors of Plasm *is one of Defiant's last publications.*

According to Smith, new financing failed to materialize due to unreasonable demands by Daniel Shedrick of The River Group, the head of the current Defiant investor pool. "He nickel-and-dimed the deal to death," Smith explained.

Shedrick denies this, commenting that two offers from public companies "disappeared" over the last couple of months after they examined Defiant's "acute decline in sales, and the amount of debt they had to service." He also point out that his investors lost $2,000,000.

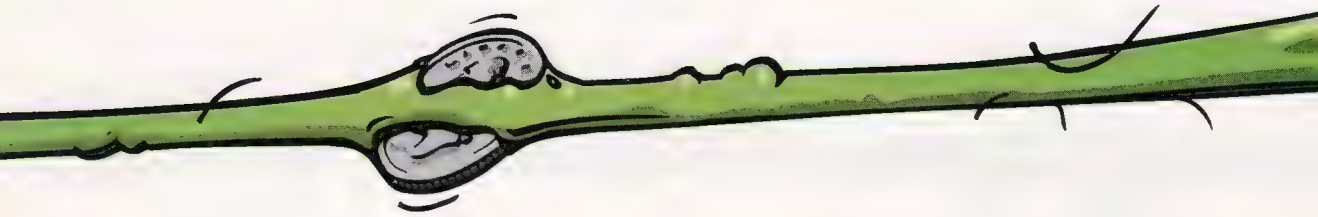
The River Group also produced the *Plasm #0* and *Dark Dominion #0* card sets and binders. Smith believes that retailer and reader resistance to the publication of Defiant's first two series' first issues in card format was one of the three primary factors in the development of the company's financial woes. Readers just did not want to spend that kind of money to get the first issues of new comics.

The second factor cited by Smith, was the trademark infringement lawsuit filed against Defiant by Marvel in August 1993, soon after the publication of *Warriors of Plasm #1*. Marvel contended that the title was too similar to the name of the Marvel UK publication *Plasmer*. While Marvel was denied the injunction it sought, the legal battle cost Defiant many hours of Shooter's time during the earliest days of publication, approximately $300,000 in attorney's fees, and—perhaps most significantly—a possibly lucrative toy deal with Mattel.

The third factor Smith believes hurt Defiant's chances was the overall decline of the comics market since the summer of 1993. When *Warriors of Plasm #1* debuted in August of that year, it commanded 2% of the market for that month all by itself. However, Defiant's market share failed to grow significantly over the next year, and that lack of growth in a shrinking marketplace dealt an apparently fatal blow to the fledgling publisher.

Shooter, who was not available for comment, is reportedly looking for a new source of financing, and hopes that Defiant is only on hiatus.

—Paul J. Grant



This Month in History

Historic comic book events that took place in the month of DECEMBER.

1939 *Silver Streak Comics* #1: The first appearance of one of comics' earliest supervillains, The Claw.

1947 *Four Color Comics* #178: The first appearance of Uncle Scrooge, one of the few major Disney characters to have appeared in comics before cartoons.

1954 *Four Color Comics* #596: Turok premieres and begins his adventures in the Lost Valley.

1965 *Amazing Spider-Man* #31: Spidey's someday-to-be-cloned girlfriend Gwen Stacy makes her debut.

1976 *Wonder Woman* TV show: The popular program starring Lynda Carter begins its successful run. The series, which lasted four seasons, was preceded by two Wonder Woman TV movies.

1980 *The New Teen Titans* #2: Deathstroke the Terminator makes his debut by taking on the popular teenage heroes.

1991 *Evil Ernie* #1: Evil Ernie and Lady Death make their first appearances in this black-and-white comic from the Malibu imprint, Eternity Comics.

—W.A.C. & M.S.

TOPPS Opens the X-FILES

Topps Comics announced at August's San Diego Comic Con that it will produce the official comic version of the hit television program ***The X-Files***. Due in January 1995, *The X-Files* monthly series will feature original stories from writer **Stefan Petrucha** (*Duckman, Lance Barnes*) and artist **Charles Adlard** (*Mars Attacks*). Topps's encore will be a card set with artwork and photographs.

The *X-Files* chronicles the adventures of FBI special agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully as they investigate unexplained/unsolved cases, while encountering UFOs and mysterious "forces."

The comic will be strikingly similar to the television show. "It'll be as close as humanly possible in tone, feel, and execution. It'll be a mix between horror and science fiction," Petrucha says. "I don't want to duplicate what the show's writers have already done, but I'd like to play around with some of the themes they've come up with."

Topps Editor-in-Chief **Jim Salicrup** believes the comic will appeal to the show's devoted fans (aptly named X-Philes). "It's not going to be a very 'comic booky' version of the show," says Salicrup.

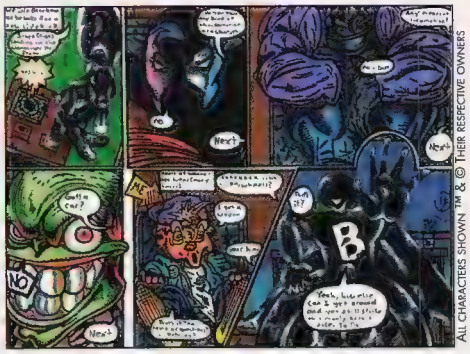
Several publishers were interested in producing *The X-Files*. "Topps offered the best deal in terms of distribution, talent and enthusiasm," says Laura Rubenstein, associate director of creative development for Fox licensing and merchandising.

Topps also holds the comic rights to ***Kolchak: The Night Stalker*** (from the 1970s TV show starring Darren McGavin), so expect cameos from its protagonist, Carl Kolchak, in *The X-Files*. Salicrup could not give specifics, but hinted that **Walter Simonson** and **Mark Chiarello** were being courted for a *Night Stalker* series.

—Buddy Scalera

BLANKMAN WINNER

Bryan Trygve Lenning of Olympia, Wash. is the Grand Prize winner in the **Blankman Art Contest** from *Wizard* #37. Bryan drew himself as Blankman's sidekick in a six-panel comic strip on the right. He won a Sony™ 27-inch TV, VCR, laserdisc player, a *Blankman* autographed script, T-shirt, and pin. Congratulations, Bryan! ☆



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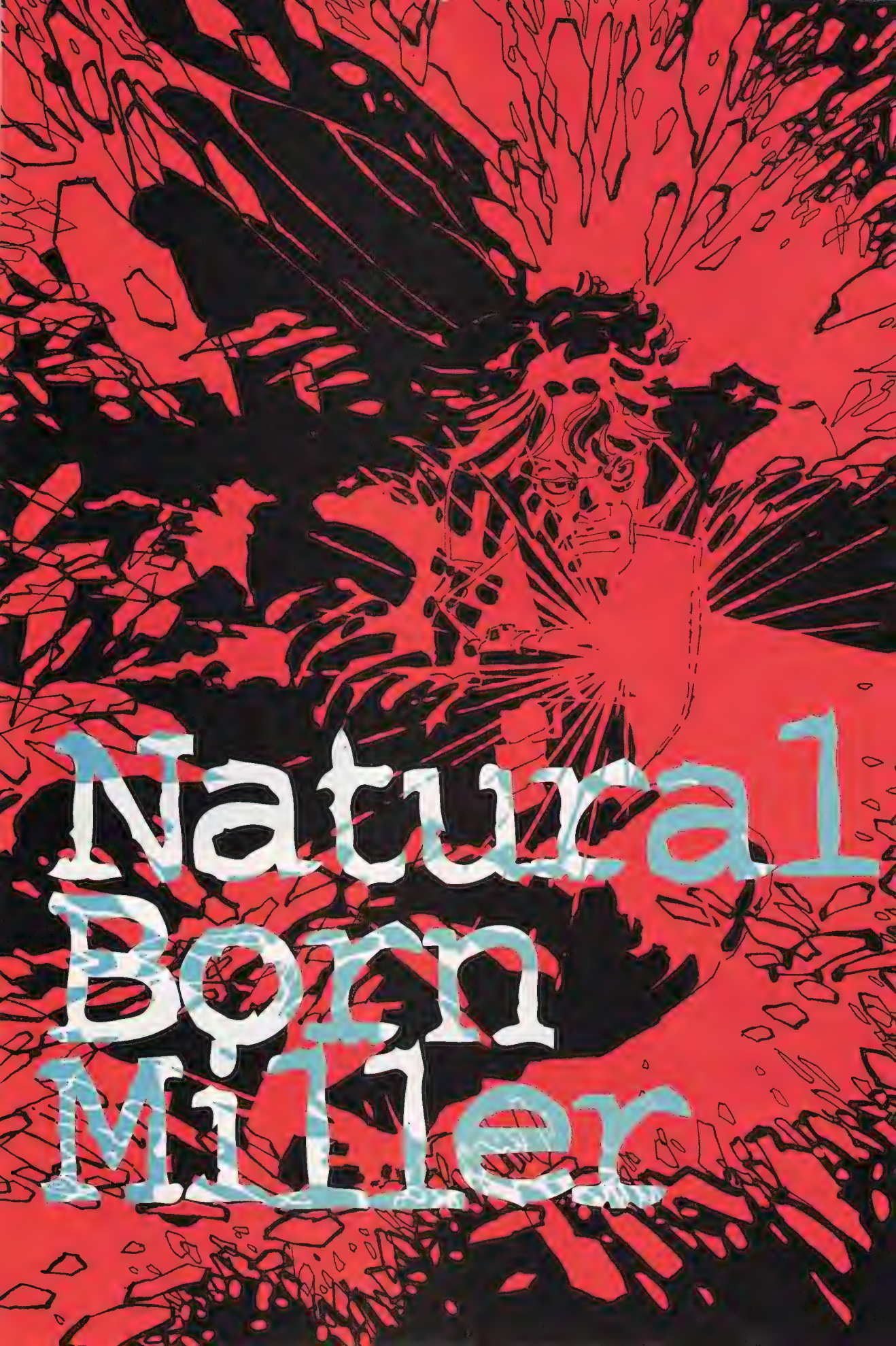

Natural
Born
Miller

Creator Frank Miller on forming Legend, taking risks, and the one project he's got a hankerin' to do.

By Jack Curtin

Every industry has its movers and shakers. In comics, Frank Miller has arguably been "The Man" for nearly 15 years. In 1979, he seemed to come out of nowhere to draw, and soon write, Marvel Comics's Daredevil, turning a completely desolate book into a best-seller. In 1984, his six-issue Ronin for DC Comics changed the idea of what mainstream comics could be about. Two years later, Batman: The Dark Knight Returns helped bring a darker perspective to superheroes, which immediately became, and remains, the dominant contemporary vision. He then tried his hand at writing movie scripts, and literally burst back onto the comics scene in the '90s with a group of creator-owned, independent projects: Hard Boiled, Give Me Liberty, and the first chapter of his magnum opus, Sin City, which was first serialized in Dark Horse Presents. With fellow creator and friend John Byrne, he created Legend, a creator imprint that reflects his concern for the rights of "the talent" in comics. This imprint, currently published by Dark Horse, has some of the industry's finest, most respected creators putting out their own material, to which they retain the rights.

It is Miller's outspokenness for creator's rights and anti-censorship, however, that most clearly mark his place among the most important figures in the industry. This was never more evident than at the annual Diamond Comics Distributors Seminar this past June, when keynote speaker Miller powerfully denounced Marvel Comics's treatment of Jack Kirby, among others, the Comics Code, and cover labeling.

Miller talked with Wizard about these and other matters a few weeks later.

LEFT: DWIGHT DOES HIS THING.
INSET: MR. MILLER.

All artwork and characters ™ & © Frank Miller unless otherwise noted. Photo of Frank Miller by J. Schuyler.

WIZARD: You sure did raise a few eyebrows at the Diamond Seminar. You said in your speech that the comics industry has "a sad, sorry history." You added, "I can't call it the Marvel Age of Comics, because I don't believe in rewarding thievery." Strong words.

FRANK MILLER: Well, the sort of clouded, confused history that most people have of comics causes a lot of problems. We could make some critical mistakes right now if we don't honestly look at where we've been. It seems, across the years, that Marvel in particular has done absolutely nothing to redress the iniquities of the situation with Kirby and [Steve] Ditko and the rest of the early creators. And I believe [Marvel] should still be taken to task for it.

You were pretty rough on Marvel. Do you think you have burned all your bridges there?

Not at all. You know, there's this strange part of the comic book mentality which is what I call the "paycheck by silence." Keep your mouth shut or you'll suffer. **I have always been vocal**, whether working for Marvel or not, **about what I think is wrong or is being done wrong.** If I'm asked today where comics are going wrong, in the midst of the total collapse of the superhero universes, at a time when the works of Lee and Kirby and Ditko are being literally strip mined to the point of idiocy, then I will speak my mind. If I thought Dark Horse, which is my current publisher, was completely off the wall and harming the industry, I'd say that too.

My relationship with Marvel has been very good; we've both profited very well. Nothing is owed on either end. But the issues of the past do need to be addressed, because Jack Kirby may be gone, but he's still got a family, and Marvel still hasn't done one single thing to credit him or to pay him back.

I'll blast Marvel on this and that—and will continue to do so—[but] I will say that **my first run on Daredevil was a joyous time.** I did very well by it, I had an absolute gas doing it, and I built my career on it. I was working with [inker] Klaus Janson and [colorist] Glynis Oliver—Klaus and I were just a terrific team in our working relationship—so I am not speaking bitterly. My involvement with that character has been a lot of fun. Each time, working with David Mazzuchelli [on *Daredevil* #227-#233] and John Romita Jr. [on *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*], I got to work with really extraordinary artists.

Can you envision yourself ever working for Marvel or DC again, or are you now pretty much committed to doing your own work and being in control?

I never say "never." Right now, I'm in love with what I'm doing; it's the best of all possible worlds. People are buying *Sin City*, which is my dream project. I have all the pleasures and responsibilities of owning it. I don't see much reason, when I've got *Martha Washington Goes to War* and *Sin City*, to be doing other things. **I feel like I'm really contributing to the future of comics now as best I can**, rather than just being one more person who's milking the work of previous generations.

You are obviously very concerned about issues such as labeling and censorship; basically any sort of repression of creative activity.

I see a great danger if we surrender before anybody shows up. We don't even have a real enemy to stand and fight right now. It seems to me that it all goes back to how confused everybody's version of the past is, because people still by and large believe that the U.S. Senate forced the Comics Code on us, when in fact the Senate vindicated the industry. Comics have never been censored from the outside. Because of that misconception, though, people in the industry somehow see the outside world as this big, bad force that can come and take us any time it wants to. This has never been tested. It is particularly ridiculous that people would be talking this way when, by all indications, the big, bad world barely knows we exist. They've got much bigger fish to fry, with video games and cable TV and so on, and they're frying them, because the people in those fields didn't stand and fight. I think it's particularly important that we remember that **we're part of the publishing industry, which has a strong record of fighting for the First Amendment.** We should align ourselves with them and avoid any of the appurtenances of modern self-censorship like cover advisories [such as "Suggested for Mature Readers"] or ratings. We don't want to invite the censors in, do we?

On the face of it, cover advisories seem innocuous, but they are far from that. Those who argue in favor of an advisory say that it just tells people what's in the book, that it doesn't compromise the content in any way. But what it is, really, is an invitation for censors, because we're saying that we're now going to apologize every time we do something that isn't fit for a Saturday morning cartoon. There are other ways to resolve whatever problems exist.

Such as...?

I've been talking to retailers an awful lot over the past several months, and I've gotten a very clear idea of what the legitimate problem is, and it doesn't have anything to do with cover advisories. The only real coherent complaint that I've heard from retailers—beyond the scare talk, of course, and there's no answering that—is that [they] often don't know about what you might term "more extreme content," as often or as clearly as they might like to. They generally get that information with the solicitation, but that's usually three months before they get the book. Very few people can read all the books they get as they arrive, and they often aren't fully aware that a particular title or issue might be controversial.

Lou Bank [VP of Sales and Marketing] at Dark Horse has come up with a very good solution. Dark Horse is going to start informing retailers on a weekly basis about its books. [Retailers are] going to have weekly reminders so that they'll know that when they get, say, *Sin City*, that this is really pretty strong material. This way, the retailer has the information, but there is no policy statement printed on the cover. It seems to me to be a wonderful solution without even the hint of censorship.

One instance where such weekly reminders would be helpful would be when an issue of an ongoing title, not normally controversial in any way, falls into a gray area.

That's a tough one, you know? That's one of the cases where the different segments of the industry have to work together. You can legitimately say that the creator and the publisher have a responsibility here. I don't think you should confuse the issue: if you have something that looks and acts and feels like a kid's comic, and always has, you can't just suddenly go completely off the wall. That's an editorial responsibility, and, in many cases, complaints would be legitimate there. But I don't see that cover advisories are applicable even in a case like that.

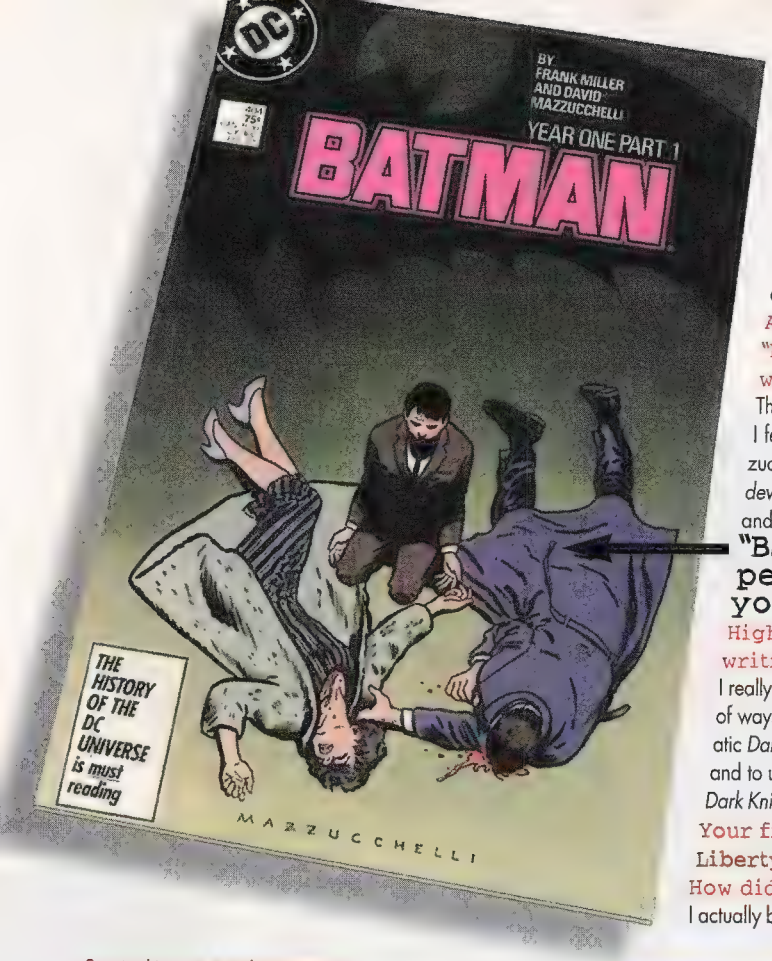
Let me be clear. I don't think cover advisories serve any good purpose. They don't protect anyone from censorship. As a matter of fact, while working as a part of the Board of Directors of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, I've found all my suspicions to be true. In nearly every case, **it is the book with the advisory label that the police and the parents groups come looking for.** It saves them a lot of time trying to figure out what they want to complain about. **Censors are really pretty stupid. Let's not help them do their job.**

When did you get started in comics?

The late '70s. I bopped around doing some work for DC and Gold Key before I got regular work from Marvel. There was a wonderful *Peter Parker, the Spectacular Spider-Man* assignment [issues #27-#28], because I got to draw Spider-Man, one of my childhood friends, and I got to do Daredevil, who had never been one of my favorite characters. When I started drawing him, though, I realized I really liked the character, and I started lobbying for the regular book, and they were willing to take a chance on me, as it turned out.

That was one of the things I was going to ask about. You actively went after Daredevil; it wasn't just a

DWIGHT & GAIL (OPPOSITE) CAN MORE THAN FILL THE BIG BOOTS OF MARV (ABOVE) IN THE ONGOING SAGA OF *SIN CITY*.



it was time to put that on the table and see if I could get people to follow something new and different.

That was a real good time at DC Comics. They were desperate to compete with Marvel, which was a juggernaut, so we got a lot more freedom, a lot of chances to do things. That was also when DC decided to respond to the pressure from the independents and introduce royalties. You'll hear other versions of that, but DC did it first. And it was a time of tremendous autonomy and of really unheard-of production values.

A favorite story of mine has always been "Batman: Year One," from Batman #404-#407, which was the last work you did at DC.

That was one of those projects you just love every moment of. I felt inspired as I was writing and working with David Mazzucchelli, who I'd worked with on [my second run of] *Daredevil*. I'd seen him go from being a promising talent to maturing and developing at such a rapid rate that it made my head spin.

"Batman: Year One" is as close a perfect comic book art job as you could ask for.

High praise indeed. But what about your writing on the book?

I really don't wanna brag. I'm really proud of the job. It was in a lot of ways a really fun book to write. After sort of doing the big operatic *Dark Knight*, to come in and do the first year of Batman's career, and to use so many of the notions I put together as the back story to *Dark Knight*, was a lot of fun. I knew there was a real story to tell there.

Your first independent work was Give Me Liberty with artist Dave Gibbons in 1990. How did you develop that?

I actually began working on *Give Me Liberty* shortly after *Dark Knight*.

fortuitous assignment?

Oh no, I wanted it. Jo Duffy, who was editing the book, fought for me, and Jim Shooter took a chance on me, and I was real grateful for it. The first few issues I drew were written by Roger McKenzie, then I took over after ten issues or so.

Daredevil had several advantages for me. One was that he wasn't superpowerful and couldn't fly, so he wasn't too fantastic, too big for the stories I wanted to do. And another, honestly, was that the book was just selling horribly. That's the best time to get hold of a character. It worked for me on *Daredevil* and it worked later on *Batman*. Everybody's more willing to take chances, and you get a lot more leeway. Once something's a success, management begins to start convincing themselves that they're the reason, and they start writing up bibles and such and it becomes really claustrophobic.

Do you have any reaction to the changes Marvel has made in Daredevil of late?

All I know is Daredevil's got some really funky-looking new costume and **they're bringing back a character they call Elektra, but it couldn't really be her because she's dead.**

After the long run on Daredevil, you moved over to DC and did Ronin. That was certainly a different piece of work from what people expected.

It was scary, but I really felt it was time to get serious and to do something that wasn't derived from the same sources, to stop mining the same territory. I had recently discovered manga, things like *Lone Wolf and Cub*, as well as the work of Moebius and other European artists, and was inspired. I felt that the timing was right to make an attempt at something. I'd gained a certain popularity, and

BATMAN ™ & © DC COMICS. DAREDEVIL ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP.

Dave Gibbons and I decided we wanted to do something together. We had a lot of fits and starts—he'd send me drawings, I'd send him scenes—and it took a while to pull together. I wanted to do some political parody and wanted a character who broke the mold a bit. I knew I wanted to touch on patriotic themes.

I started thinking about what really makes a hero, what would make an American hero, a Horatio Alger type of story. I decided that **a hero's chief attribute is that he or she overcomes obstacles.** When I started to figure out just what obstacles I could put in my hero's way, the first two that leaped to mind were black and female, and Martha Washington emerged.

What I love most about Martha is that she doesn't feel sorry for herself, ever. She just overcomes [trials] and moves ahead. That's what makes her heroic. She's got every excuse in the world to play victim, but she doesn't.

Did you and Dave plan Give Me Liberty as a single mini-series, or did you always know that there would be sequels?

Oh, the plan was always to tell much more of Martha's story. The plan is [to] tell her life story over the next bunch of years. We started with her birth, and we'll end with her death. It's just a matter of scheduling that took us so long to get to *Martha Washington Goes to War*. I'm hoping that we can come back and visit her much more frequently, preferably every year.

You did another independent project, Hard Boiled, at the same time. That looks like something you just decided to have some fun with.

That's pretty close. Geof Darrow and I were having lunch, and he asked me if I'd write him a story. Geof and I are good friends, and I love his work and was waiting for him to hit the scene in America—he was already notorious in France—so I said sure. He said basically that he'd like to see something with a guy who was capable of a lot of destruction. [Laughs] I proceeded to write him a script. Then I got the first bunch of pages back from him and very quickly threw my script into the trash, because I realized that Geof had turned my rather straightforward story into an absurdist piece—a brilliant one.

It took me a few hours of stomping around my studio and cursing him out until I could accept that I was playing straight man and find my way to write it the way he drew it. I had to let him go completely berserk and then use the words to give it some context, and pull it back just a little bit, perhaps. When you have images that are that horrifying and that ridiculous, the best thing to do is to play the dialogue soft and sparse.

All this followed a period in the late '80s when you did very little comics work. I presume Sin City was simmering under the surface all the while.

Yeah, I was involved with the *RoboCop* movies at that point, so there really wasn't much time to draw. Now *that* was an amazing experience. [Laughs] It really was. It was thrilling—sort of one of those unforgettable times when every single thing you encounter is brand-new to you. I saw *RoboCop 2* from the very earliest stages through to the editing, had a million fights along the way, made some friends, and learned a lot about that field.

You know, the way I got that assignment was weird in itself. Several friends had been telling me I had to see this movie, *RoboCop*, so I finally gave in to the pressure and rented it. I just loved it, of course. Then, maybe two days later, the phone rang and it was Jon Davison, the producer, asking me to write *RoboCop 2*. It was the damnedest thing. I had reached sort of a creative lull after *Dark Knight* and wasn't coming up with anything I wanted to do, and getting into the movies seemed like a fun adventure, and it was. So I wrote number two, and then I wrote number three with the director Fred Dekker.

Were you pleased with the films upon release?

Oh, geez. It's kind of hard to tell. When you work on a movie, it's not like comics, really; there's so many hands in it. I can point to stuff I really liked in both movies, and stuff I really despised. I would be the last person to judge what kind of movies they are. I don't think I'll work on RoboCop again. I don't really think that I have much to say about the character at this point. Especially since they have moved him to TV and they've made him much nicer. I loved that first movie with that kind of sarcasm in it, and really wanted to make the sequels as gutsy and as bold as the first one, but that was not the studio's intent.

Is there any chance that your own work—say, Sin City or Martha Washington—will ever be transformed into a movie?

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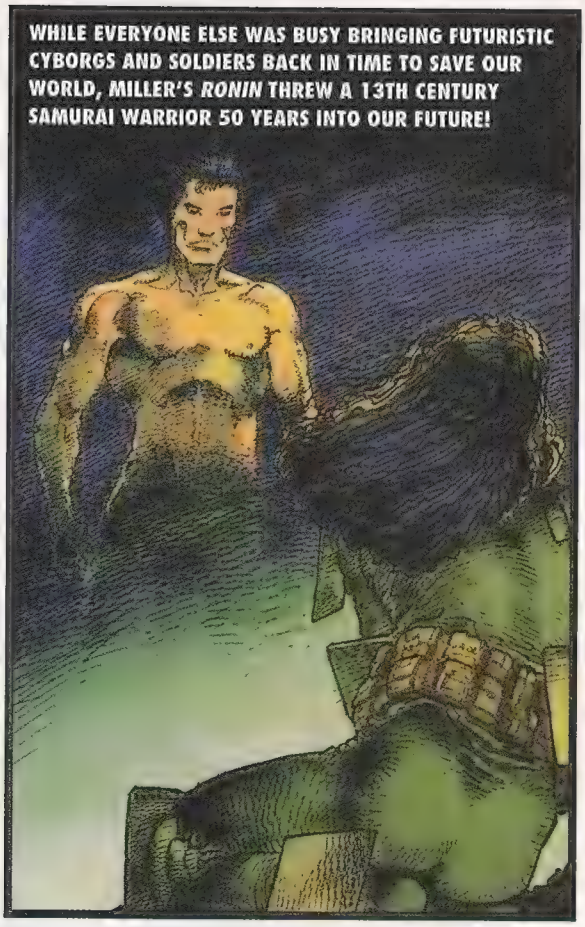

It would be a lot of fun to do it, but the only way I'd ever do it is if I could direct it myself. And that would mean not doing comics for several years, and that would be a hell of a sacrifice. I'm content right now to think that *Sin City* makes a real good comic book.

Let's get back to discussing how Sin City came about.

To get back to the topic, I didn't draw during this time, and I really missed it—it was almost a physical thing the way I missed it—so I decided when the dust settled from the movies to sit down and finally do the comic I wanted to do the most. And so I sat down and started *Sin City*. It was always going to be at Dark Horse. I had a good working relationship there, and that made things simpler. I was nervous because I hadn't been drawing for a while, so I gave myself some very low-pressure deadlines. Plus, I wanted to take a low-profile approach, so I wouldn't feel too silly if everybody hated it. I told Randy Stradley, who was editing *Dark Horse Presents*, that I wanted to do a six-part crime story of eight pages each [part]. An easy-to-meet deadline, nothing to be nervous about. With that agreement, **I sat down to work, and, of course, it turned out to be 13 chapters instead of six and 200-plus pages instead of 48.**

All this was before Legend, right? You didn't yet have the group together?

That's right. Legend came about later when John Byrne and I decided between us that the time was right. We thought that putting together a group of talent with similar intent made good sense. We figured *we'd* get it rolling, because if he and I could agree on something, then everybody could. John and I disagree a lot. But we basically got it up and running and invited the people we felt were most appropriate to join us. Today, I should point out, [John and I] no longer run Legend.

Does that mean it isn't run at all, that this is just a group of creators who have agreed to use the Legend imprint, or is there more to it than that?

Oh, there are certain ground rules, none of which were ever written down, but which we all seem to understand. I mean, we are really talking about a wild bunch here. Essentially, it is an imprint for this group of talent, and it is an imprint for creator-owned and produced material only. It is not meant as a set-up for people to hire other people to continue their series. It is us putting it on the line.

There are eight of you who can use the Legend imprint right now: you, John Byrne, Art Adams, Mike Allred, Paul Chadwick, Geof Darrow, Dave Gibbons, and Mike Mignola. I hear rumors that two more creators will be joining the group. Is there anything you might want to say about that?

I wouldn't comment on anything like that until we're ready to make an announcement. It just wouldn't be fair. [But] there may be an announcement or two before long.

Do you think the Bravura imprint at Malibu Comics was inspired by Legend?

I think it's fairer to say that we both are responding to Image. The Image guys did us all the great favor of introducing the concept of a talent-based imprint, and the even greater favor of showing us that it worked. Now they've since gone on to be a formal publishing company, but the idea stuck, and Bravura and Legend are more "brother" imprints than "father/son." Both sprang from discussions I had with Walter Simonson and others to form an imprint several years ago. That fell apart for a variety of really tedious reasons that aren't worth going into, and ultimately the two imprints were born. I kind of like the idea of there being two of them.

There are differences between Legend and Bravura. Everybody in Legend can draw, for example. That's one of those unwritten ground rules I mentioned. At Bravura, there's a more open policy. The one clear similarity between the two groups is that they are both based upon talent.

You mentioned Image as an inspiration to all this. In your Diamond speech, you said very strongly that you felt the Image guys have not gotten the appreciation, respect, or thanks that they are due.

I've been amazed at the hostility, especially by some other artists, that has been shown toward Image. I know what it's like to take a big chance professionally, and those guys did it. **You know, people don't think so looking back at it now, but Dark Knight was a big risk for me. It happened to work out real well, so now it looks like it was a sure thing all along. But I could have been the guy who really screwed up Batman** or the guy who ruined that bookshelf format for all time if it had been a real bomb. A lot was on the line. A high-format comic, one with high production values, was something I very much wanted to bring along in American comics. To have guys like [DC's Production Manager] Bob Rozakis and me and [colorist] Lynn Varley all killing ourselves on the book to make it as good as possible, it would have been a heartbreaker if it hadn't taken off.

The point is that the Image guys *did* take a chance and, certainly for the talent, they have made this industry a better place. For example, [pay] rates have gone up at Marvel in an attempt to compete. [Image] offers a place where people can now work under much better terms, and they've broken Marvel's stranglehold on the marketplace. They did a very good thing. I think what they did took a lot of

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courage, and they've made a lot of people's lives better.

I know, from the retail end, there has been a big problem with the scheduling difficulties, and I understand they are correcting that. And, sure, they bug some people a lot, because they are so damned cocky about what they do, but they've been a real good thing.

So, Image broke the stranglehold.

Yes, but we should never forget Neal Adams and everything he tried to do back in comics' dark ages, and the things that he taught us. If it weren't for the things that Neal did, I couldn't have done the things that I did to help make things better for artists. And if it weren't for me and my group, Image could never have happened. And now that Image has happened, it's benefiting me. So there's kind of a historical continuity there.

One of the criticisms of Image was the lack of good writing, and they've been making an effort to bring a lot of good writers on board now. You wrote an issue of Todd McFarlane's Spawn, for example.

That was a real kick. I hadn't really been an active part of the comics world for a while. I hadn't been going to conventions and keeping up with what was going on, or even been to the comic shop too much, and I get this call from Todd, who says he'd like me to write an issue of *Spawn*. I had to apologize to him and tell him I had never seen any of his work. So he sent me several issues of *Spawn*, and I just took a look at the energy crackling off those pages and the fun he was obviously having, and knew that was a party I definitely wanted to join. He gave me complete freedom as far as what was happening in the story, and I had a great time doing it.

Then there's Spawn/Batman. Were you comfortable with the way it was received?

That was an absolute blast. I understand that some people really liked it and some people really hated it. But that's the kind of reaction you want, usually. Some people didn't like the fact that it was written so much as a comedy, but I thought in the era of the crossover, somebody had to have some fun with it. I knew that if people compared it to *Dark Knight*, it was a suicide mission.

Just about the time this sees print, we ought to be seeing the last issue of Martha Washington Goes to War and a special Sin City one-shot—is that right?

That, and more. *Sin City: The Babe Wore Red & Other Stories* is due in November. It includes the 24-page serial I did for Diamond's *Previews* catalogue and two other stories—a one-shot I did for Diamond a while back, and one I did for the San Diego Comic Con comic book a couple of years ago. And the third *Sin City* book, *The Big Fat Kill*, also starts in November. This one is a five-part series, and it's the fastest-paced of the three. It takes place in a very short period of time, where a great deal happens.

The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot has already been announced as a new project for next year. Is that on the schedule at this point?

I think we're talking about early next year. I'm doing it with Geof Darrow, of course, and we'll just wait until Geof's finished before we schedule it. We're talking about a two-issue story to begin with. I can tell you, from what I've seen so far, that the one thing that hasn't changed in Geof's work is the amount of detail. This is going to be denser and more detailed than *Hard Boiled*.

Beyond that, what else can we look forward to?

Nothing is scheduled right now, because I've got *Big Fat Kill* to finish first, and I've learned the importance of staying on schedule. My future plans center around doing one *Martha Washington* and one *Sin City* every year. I've already worked out the premise for the next *Martha*, and I've got a pretty good idea what [the fourth] *Sin City* will be about. But it's *way* too early to talk about them.

I'm dying to get going on *Martha* again, and as soon as Dave gives the word, we'll be rolling again. It all depends on his schedule and what he feels like doing next. As far as *Sin City 4*, well, I'll be doing that right after [*Big Fat Kill*]. And I've got a host of new characters to introduce. A whole world there's just expanding. The two projects are very different that way, in that *Sin City* really is a series set in a place with an ensemble cast, and *Martha* is chronicling Martha's life. To say anything about *Martha 3*, I'd have to give away the ending of this *Martha*, because everything changes. I'd be blowing far too many punchlines. I can tell you for sure that I intend to launch a new *Sin City* each November for the foreseeable future.

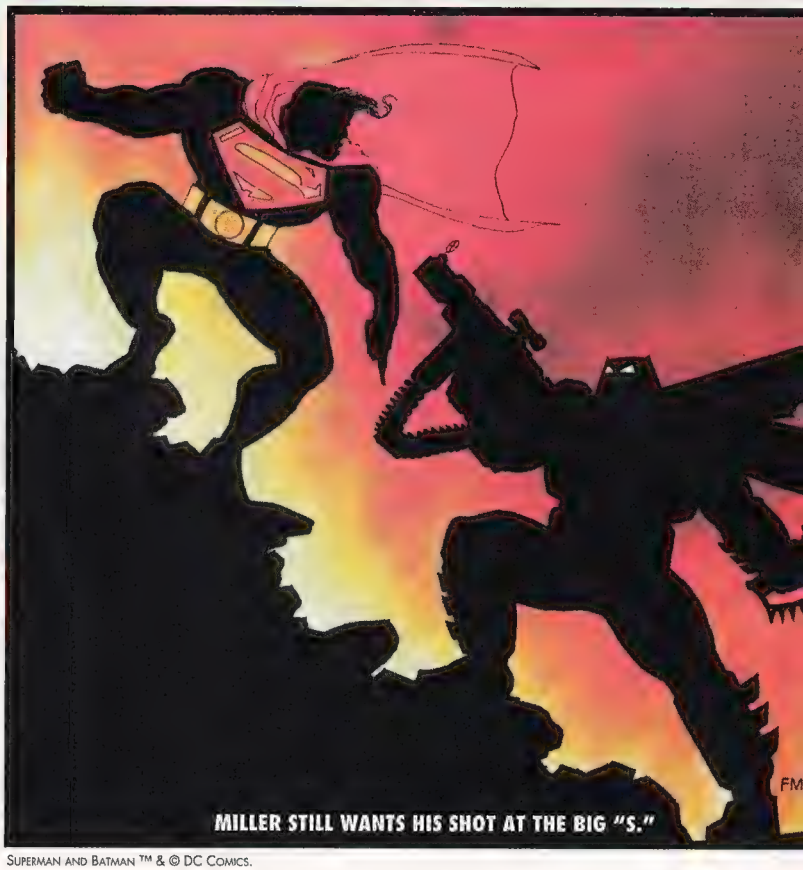
Great. How about crossovers?

Martha goes to Sin City? [Laughs] In a way, she was almost born there. Generally speaking, I gotta say that I don't think you can really expect to see Martha or Sin City cross over with anything, because they really do have entire worlds of their own. It's much more likely that something like the *Big Guy* that I'm doing with Geof Darrow would cross over. That really is quite likely.

And you don't close the door to going back now and then and doing something for the majors?

Oh no, I can never quite slam that door. **I look up at the shelf where I keep the books I've done and I keeping wishing one of them had the big "S" on the spine.** Someday... ☆

Jack Curtin is a freelance writer based in Philadelphia.



MILLER STILL WANTS HIS SHOT AT THE BIG "S."

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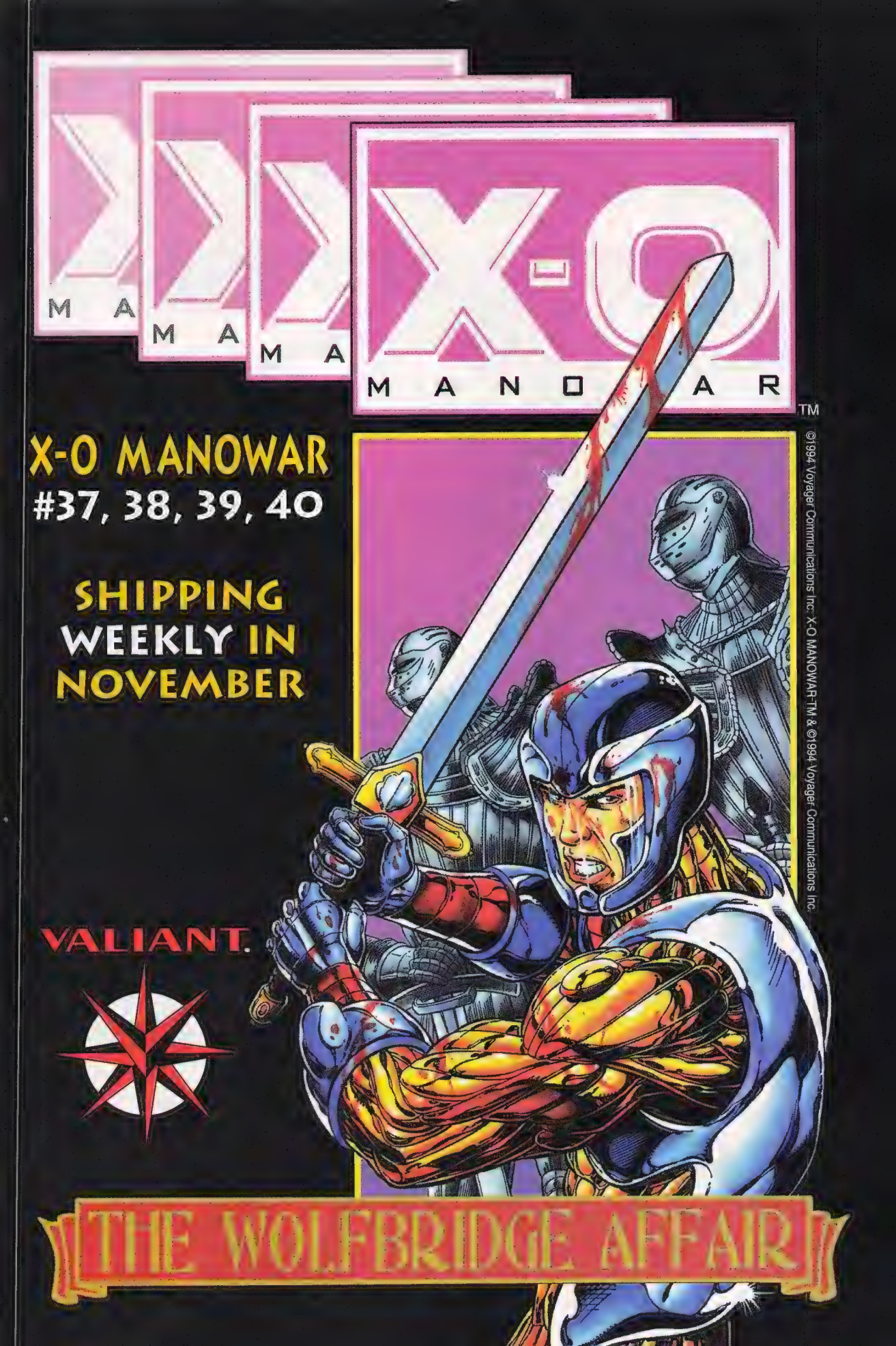
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For the names of the winners, available after January 20, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to X-O Costume Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

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Fables & Reflections

A visit with Neil Gaiman, who tells of his world of dreams, getting to know Alice Cooper, and why he did this interview

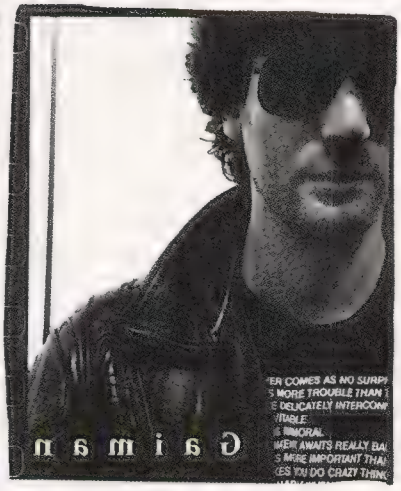
Sandman

By Paul J. Grant

Neil Gaiman was not, by his own admission, all that keen on doing an interview for *Wizard*. "I'm doing this mainly for Mikey," he says, referring to his 11-year-old son who likes *Wizard*, especially the section on toys. Gaiman, who at 34 still has an uncanny sense of what childhood is about, agreed to this article, not as a writer seeking publicity, but as an understandably indulgent father.

As far back as he can remember, Gaiman was a writer. Before he learned to read at the age of three, he dictated poems to his mother. She, charmed by her son's precocity, would write them down in her notebook. Gaiman remembers a couple of those poems and "wouldn't recite them for the world." Once he learned to read, though, he read "absolutely anything," with a preference for science fiction and fantasy.

"I read my way through the local public library's children's section, from A to Zed," he recalls. "It took me about a year, and then I started on the adult library."



Gaiman decided that he wanted to make writing comics his profession when he was about 14 or 15. "I used to write and draw comics," he relates. "My drawing was incredibly bad, and I wrote odd little existential comics about the last person on Earth walking through desolate, empty cities that were fun to draw, and whenever he'd meet anybody he'd be forced to accidentally kill them. We had a day of careers testing at school, and the next day we were called in one by one to meet an outside careers advisor. He looked at my stuff and said, 'You've scored the highest on vocabulary that anyone has ever scored on this test. What do you want to do?' I said, 'I want to write American comics.' He just looked at me and said, 'How do you go about doing that, then?' I said, 'You tell me; you're the careers advisor.' There was another pause, and he said, 'Have you ever thought about accountancy?'" Instead, Gaiman became a journalist, with a hidden agenda.

"I became a journalist to find out how the world of publishing worked," he admits. "I couldn't get anything published. Things came back with nice notes. I had two alternatives: either I was not very good, which for purposes of ego I did not choose to believe, or I didn't understand how the whole thing worked and things would improve if I figured out what I was doing wrong. So I woke up one morning and decided I was a journalist. I got on the phone, and by the end of the day I had sold two articles, as yet unwritten. Some months later, I'd talked my way into a number of jobs and two book contracts. I think it is a very good thing for any young writer to have to produce a couple hundred thousand words a year, on demand, to tight deadlines."

THE ROAD to Blackhawk Kid

Gaiman's entry into the world of comics writing, as it was for so many other young British hopefuls, was through the weekly *2000 A.D.*, a series published by Fleetway which featured short pieces called "Future Shocks." At first, he enjoyed the experience, but when his third piece came out, he discovered that the artist had ignored most of the script directions and some editor had taken out all the jokes. That, coupled with the realization that the company paid no royalties for his work, and saw no reason to do so, led to his decision to move on.

His next step was "a comic that never happened" called *Borderline*, through which he met—among other talents—Mark Buckingham and Dave McKean. Paul Gravatt, then editor of a magazine called *Escape*, decided to do an article on *Borderline*, and took a liking to Gaiman and McKean's work. He asked them if they'd like to work on something together for *Escape*. When Gaiman and McKean came to him a week later and said, "Yes, we would, but instead of doing a five-page story for your magazine, can we do you a 48-page graphic novel called *Violent Cases*?" Gravatt, to his credit, said yes.

In early 1987, while McKean was drawing *Violent Cases*, Gaiman learned that DC Comics's President Jenette Kahn, Executive Editor Dick Giordano, and Editor Karen Berger were in London on a headhunting expedition. He called their hotel and said, "Hello, you don't know me, but I'm an English writer, and I would like to meet with you and show you my stuff." An appointment was set for later that afternoon.

Gaiman then called McKean and said, "DC wants to see us." McKean had been to New York about six months earlier to show everyone his portfolio, with disappointing results. "He did not believe there was any work for him in America. I practically had to frog-march him up to the room."

Gaiman pitched a Phantom Stranger series, but the company had already committed to the Paul Kupperberg/Mike Mignola/P. Craig Russell mini-series. They looked through McKean's portfolio, and asked, "What do you want to do?"

Gaiman suggested Green Arrow, but was told another creator—in this case, Mike Grell—would be doing that. The same went for the Forever People and several other characters. Eventually, he got to the bottom of the mental list he'd drawn up and said, "What about Black Orchid?"

"Blackhawk Kid? Who's he?" asked Berger.

Giordano, who apparently understood Gaiman's accent better, said, "Good character. OK, do Black Orchid."

That was on a Thursday, and the DC contingent was leaving on Sunday. McKean grumbled to Gaiman once they were alone, "I didn't want to do Black Orchid. I wanted to do something with Swamp Thing and the rain forests." Gaiman promised to get rain forests in there somewhere, and he followed through.

In one day, Gaiman had the outline for the series, and a day later McKean had finished five paintings. They dropped them off at the hotel on Saturday. Years later, Berger told Gaiman that the reason he and McKean were taken so seriously was the fact that she had the material in hand before she went home.

Dreams COME TRUE

Sandman, the work for which Neil Gaiman is best known, came about in a rather indirect fashion. After *Black Orchid* #1 had been written and drawn, he got a worried phone call from Berger. DC, it seemed, was having second thoughts. He remembered the conversation being along the lines of "You're two guys that nobody's ever heard of, working on a character nobody's ever heard of, and it's a female character at that, and female characters don't sell, and it's this big *Dark Knight Returns*-format project. We want Dave to draw a Batman comic that Grant Morrison is going to write [*Arkham Asylum*], and we want you to do a monthly comic, and we'll shelve *Black Orchid* and bring it out a few years down the line when you and Dave have made names for yourselves."

Eventually, DC proceeded as originally planned and published *Black Orchid* in 1988, preceding *Sandman* and *Arkham Asylum*. DC

didn't put off *Black Orchid*, according to Berger, most likely because *Arkham Asylum* was experiencing delays, and *Black Orchid* was already being worked on. In the meantime, however, Gaiman had to come up with an idea for a monthly comic. Six months earlier, he'd been talking to Jenette Kahn, who asked what he wanted to do after *Black Orchid*. Gaiman said, "*Black Orchid* is so realistic, I'd love to do a comic that was completely dreamlike. Maybe something with the Sandman character." Later, when he spoke to Berger, she recalled that earlier suggestion, but said, "Don't make it the 1970s Sandman. [Writer] Roy Thomas is doing something with him. Just make a new one up."

And so it began...

Once he'd come up with an all-new Sandman, he reasoned that, "if you have the embodiment of Dream, then you have to have the embodiment of Death; the two define each other." He decided to make Death a young lady, then figured there had to be other members of the family. DC already had a character named Destiny, and thus there were three.

"The name 'The Endless' and Desire turned up as I was writing *Sandman* #1. I suspect that Despair turned up when I was writing *Sandman* #4, which is where she's first mentioned. I did, however, have all of them by *Sandman* #8, and I knew what they all looked like, although I wasn't completely sure about Delirium."

The first *Sandman* storyline, in issues #1-#7 from 1988-89, had a firm grounding in the DC Universe, with appearances by members of the Justice League, Cain and Abel, John Constantine, Lucien, and the supervillain Doctor Destiny. Gaiman analyzes those first steps as "a process of definition, of gathering an audience. The entire storyline is plot coupons, which is not a way of telling stories I normally like or approve of. It says you have to go out and gather one helmet, one ruby, one pouch of sand, and then you can come home."

Part of Gaiman's initial interest in the title was the fun of being able to play in the playground with DC characters, and part was testing the limits of a Mature Readers comic. He recalls writing *Sandman* #6, where Doctor Destiny terrorizes people in a diner for 24 hours, and trying to go as far as he could. "After #6, it was very hard for anyone to slap me down and say you can't go that far, because I'd already gone further," he laughs.

This is not to say that DC has always approved every story idea Gaiman's ever suggested. Two points in the original script for the serial killers convention story raised some blood pressures. The first was certain references to brand names, particularly Disney World. The other was a character's speech about masturbation.

"I wanted [a character] to be blunt to the point of clinicalness about masturbation. He began the conversation, 'I used to masturbate compulsively.' Then, when he got onto the subject of killing people, I wanted him to get all euphemistic. What I was trying for there was an ironic counterpoint, but I was told that nobody masturbates in DC comics. I assume that these days in Vertigo comics they are wanking and even [having sex]. In the DC Universe, they're still doing neither, and they're still dressing in colorful costumes and hitting each other to relieve their tension."

Sleep of the JUST

Sandman was immediately a cult hit, outselling anything comparable, including *Swamp Thing*, but still selling less than any of the superhero titles. It took a long time to reach its current level of approximately 100,000 sold a month, more than most superhero titles. Gaiman believes that the point where it all started working was when the first of the collections came out, re-presenting the second story arc: "The Doll's House."

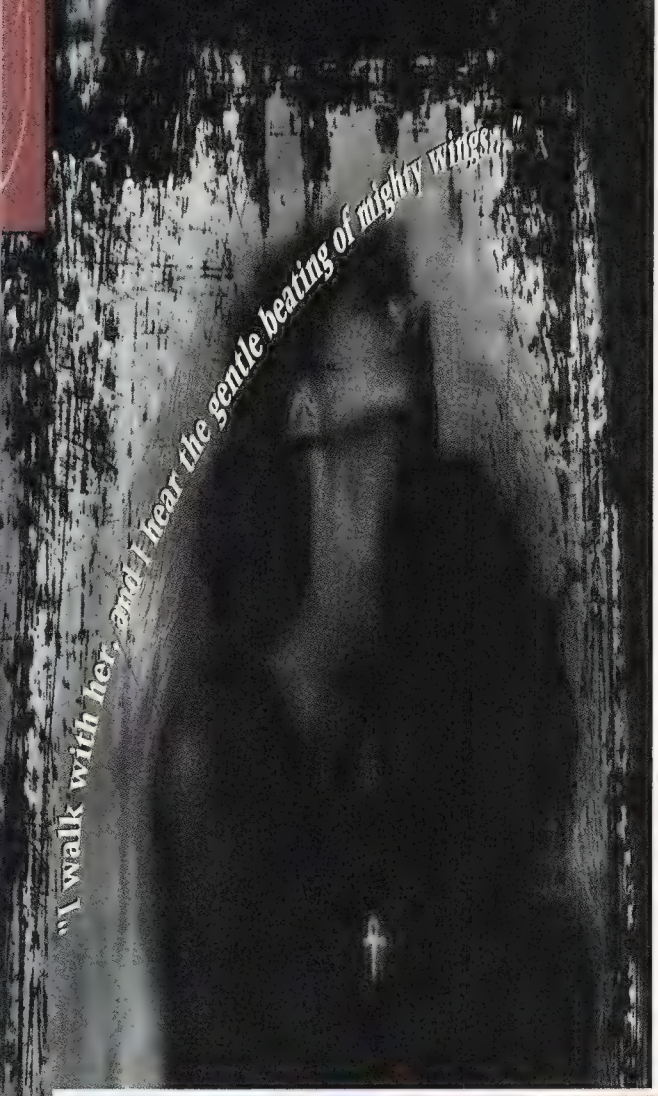
"The Doll's House" was, in retrospect, a risky story choice, since it moved the title character offstage for the most part, and focused instead on semi-familiar characters like Lyta and Hector Hall from the *Infinity Inc.* series, old characters from the 1970s *Sandman* series,

and new characters like Rose Walker, Fiddler's Green, and, most notably, the maniacal Corinthian. Gaiman recalls that, after the first storyline, there were two obvious paths that he could have followed.

"I knew I had a hit with Death as a character, so I could have done more with her. I also knew that the visit to Hell was the most popular issue we'd done, and it would have been very easy to do 'Season of Mists'—I had the plot at that point. But I figured either of those ways I'd be trapped by my own success, and I'd never be able to go any further. So I did 'Doll's House' instead."

"The Doll's House," the aforementioned serial killers convention story which ran in *Sandman* #9-#16, had been percolating in Gaiman's mind ever since a World Fantasy Convention in London in 1988. "I looked around a bar at 2:00 in the morning, at people talking about their thing, which was fantasy and horror, and I thought, everybody has conventions. You get to go away for a weekend and be special with people united by one thing, be it love of comics or love of Barry Manilow. Then I thought, 'I bet serial killers have conventions, with panels like "Women in Serial Killing."' There was a period of 14 months during which I was really worried because I knew it was an idea whose time had come, and if I didn't get it into print first, somebody else would."

After "The Doll's House" came four stand-alone stories, including issue #19's "A Midsummer Night's Dream," drawn by Charles Vess. Highly acclaimed, it went on to become the first comic ever to win a World Fantasy Award for Best Short Story. Immediately afterwards, the rules were changed so that a comic book could only win a Special Professional Award in the future. Gaiman found the whole thing rather pointless: "There is the saying 'Closing the stable door after the horse has gone.' In this case, it was 'Closing the stable door after the horse has not only gone, but has won the Kentucky Derby.'" The writer claims that he was told this happened because he had insisted



that the nomination was for both himself and Vess, not just him.

With "The Doll's House" safely out of the way, Gaiman felt secure enough to proceed with "Season of Mists." Fans expected a mystical slugfest, with Lucifer making good on his promise to destroy Dream back in *Sandman* #4. Going against expectations, Gaiman and artist Kelley Jones delivered what Gaiman describes as a "baroque theological fantasy."

"The key to 'Season of Mists' was giving [readers] not what they expected, but something that was better than what they expected," he explains. "That was one of the few storylines where I knew everything important about it going in. I knew what was going to happen when he went to Hell. It was going to be about diplomacy and dinner and real estate. And everybody thought it was going to be a story about hitting, or whatever."

Gaiman, recalling something he had heard in religious studies class when he was about 14, portrayed Hell as a home for masochists. "I believe there is a Hell because the Church teaches me there is a Hell; I do not have to believe there is anybody down there." If you could have a theologian forgiving enough to assume there wasn't anybody in Hell, he reasons, then one assumes you could have a God who would be equally forgiving, and anyone who was in Hell was there by choice.

Gaiman chose Jones as the artist for "Season of Mists" because of his baroque style. "I wanted Kelley for Hell, really," he explains. The writer has always chosen artists because of their particular strengths and what they can bring to the needs of the story, which change from storyline to storyline.

"Shawn McManus was chosen mainly for the fairyland stuff in [*Sandman* #32-#37's] 'A Game of You.' I wanted Jill Thompson for [*Sandman* #41-#49's] 'Brief Lives' because she could draw nuances of expression with subtlety. Marc Hempel, I picked, because I wanted a simplicity for [the current storyline] 'The Kindly Ones.' I wanted it to be about form and shadows and fire, and it had to [have] an artist of simple forms. I couldn't have done the Prez story [in #54] without Mike Allred. I always knew who was going to be drawing a story before I wrote it, which meant that I would be writing the story for them. The choice of artists changes the way that the story is written—the choice of panels, and what happens in it, and what people say."

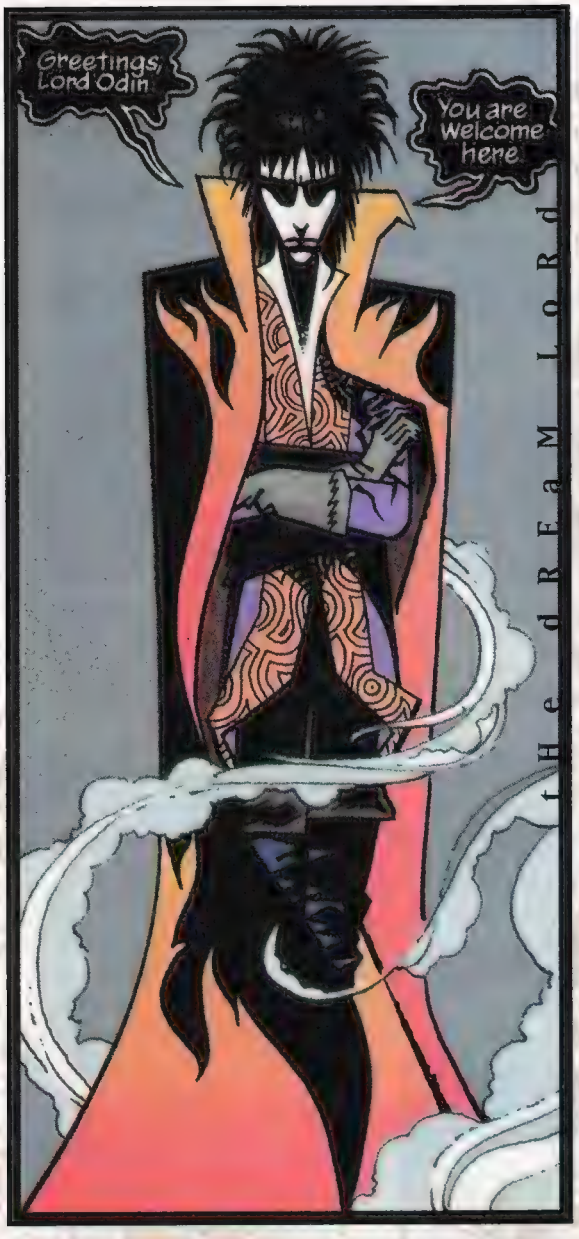
Dream's END

"The Kindly Ones" is the last major story arc of the series, and Morpheus's prospects for long-term survival are not considered all that good. As to whether he knew from *Sandman* #1 that, if the series lasted long enough, he would eventually end with the death of Morpheus, Gaiman refers to these lines from *Sandman* #6:

"All Bette's stories have happy endings. That's because she knows where to stop. She's realized the real problem with stories—if you keep them going long enough, they always end in death."

Despite that uncharacteristically direct admission, Gaiman concedes that there are things that he still doesn't know about "The Kindly Ones," and "won't know until I get there." "The Kindly Ones" was originally scheduled to run six to eight issues, and not even Gaiman knows how long it will be at this point. When asked if he's delaying the inevitable, or if the tale is growing in the telling, he observes that there are an awful lot of things to be wrapped up. "In seven years of writing, you can generate an awful lot of loose ends."

How the fans will react to the ever-approaching end of the series is something that Gaiman is obviously concerned with, but he views it philosophically. "A good funfair ride should let you off at the point that you're still enjoying it. Maybe even make you get in the queue to let you do it again. You know if it ran



for another ten minutes, you'd stumble off vomiting, having prayed for the last five minutes for it to end. Always leave them wanting more."

He is quite direct as to how DC will react to losing a solid seller, and how the company might wish to see it continue after Gaiman wraps it up. "The basic agreement is a very simple one. It's not even in writing. If *Sandman* finishes when I finish it, then I will do other stuff with DC. If they start it again with somebody else or whatever, then that will be that, the end of my working relationship with DC."

After "The Kindly Ones" ends, there will be a story in *Sandman* called "The Wake," probably lasting three issues, with Michael Zulli on artwork. This will possibly be followed by some short stories, and then "The Tempest" with Charles Vess. That will be that for *Sandman*.

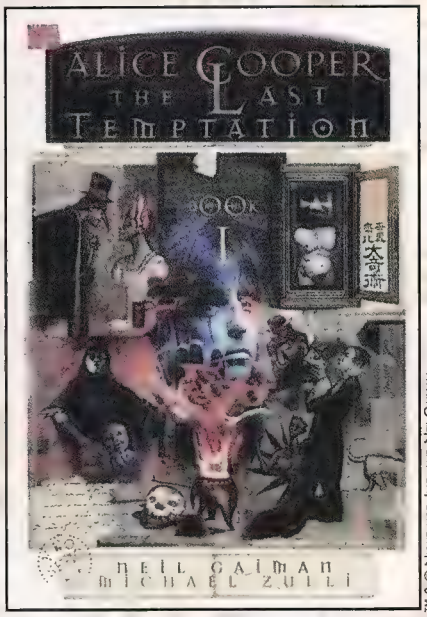
HIGH CONCEPT Rock and Roll

Of course, Gaiman has never been a one-trick magician, as projects like *The Books of Magic*, *Death: The High Cost of Living*, and the Eisner award-winning graphic novel *Signal to Noise* have clearly shown. One of his most unusual collaborations to date has been *The Last Temptation*, in which he teamed up with both rock and roll legend Alice Cooper and Marvel Comics. It all began with a phone call from Cooper's A&R (Artist & Repertoire) man Bob Pfeifer:

"[Pheifer] said, 'I have an artist who wants to make a concept album. Do you want to do it?' And he paused, and I was waiting for him to continue. And he said, 'Well?' and I said, 'Well what?' and he said, 'Do you want to come up with a concept?' I asked, 'Who is it?' and he said, 'Alice.' And I thought about it for a little bit and said, 'Let's talk further.'"

What attracted Gaiman to the project was the fact that Alice Cooper the rock star is, on some level, a fictional character. "I don't know of anyone else of whom that is true," Gaiman observes. "With Alice you have this icon, this figure, this face. It's like having Dracula or Freddy or Jason, but with no story."

For the concept, Gaiman harkened back to Cooper's stage show in the 1970s, when Alice Cooper did a Traveling Grand Guignol Rock 'n' Roll Show. He wrote the story of *The Last Temptation* for Alice, based largely on the classic Grand Guignol tradition, and Cooper took the story and turned it into an album. Once the album was made, in the summer of 1993, they were approached by a number of companies saying, "How about an Alice Cooper comic?" Since they had more plot than they'd been able to get onto the album, Gaiman and Cooper were amenable.



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How did Marvel end up with the project? Gaiman mentions three reasons: Marvel had already done an Alice Cooper comic, the company outbid everybody else, and he was interested in working with Marvel as a licenser. "I figured in terms of working with Marvel, that had to be the strongest possible position I could go in on." While Gaiman was very pleased with the comic book—drawn by Michael Zulli, one of his favorite artistic partners, he was less than enthusiastic about his experience working with Marvel.

"Marvel is a very nickel-and-dime company, very cheap. They couldn't afford Todd Klein, for example, which means that me and Michael Zulli are chipping in the extra $10 a page to get up to Todd Klein's lettering rates. They pay a lot less for everything than any other comic company, and there's something about their attitude that I find very unimpressive. I've spoken to a couple of reporters who were doing articles for major newspapers on this [project], and when they approached Marvel to get pictures and biographical information on me, they were told it wasn't Marvel's policy to promote the interests of freelancers."

Working with Alice, however, was a delight for Gaiman. "Alice is one of the sweetest, funniest people I've ever worked with," Gaiman enthuses. He was also challenged by the idea of doing a good rock comic. The original promotional tag line he'd suggested to Marvel was "*The Last Temptation*. Neil Gaiman. Michael Zulli. Alice Cooper. Who says rock and roll comics have to be crap?"

PROJECTS with Punch

A couple of other projects, the ongoing *Miracleman* for Eclipse and *Sweeney Todd*, are temporarily on hold, although for vastly different reasons. According to Gaiman, Eclipse has had *Miracleman* #25 in

hand for over a year, although artist Mark Buckingham hasn't been paid for it yet. With Eclipse's current status as publisher questionable, the fate of *Miracleman* is uncertain. Gaiman's relationship with Eclipse is definitely a strained one.

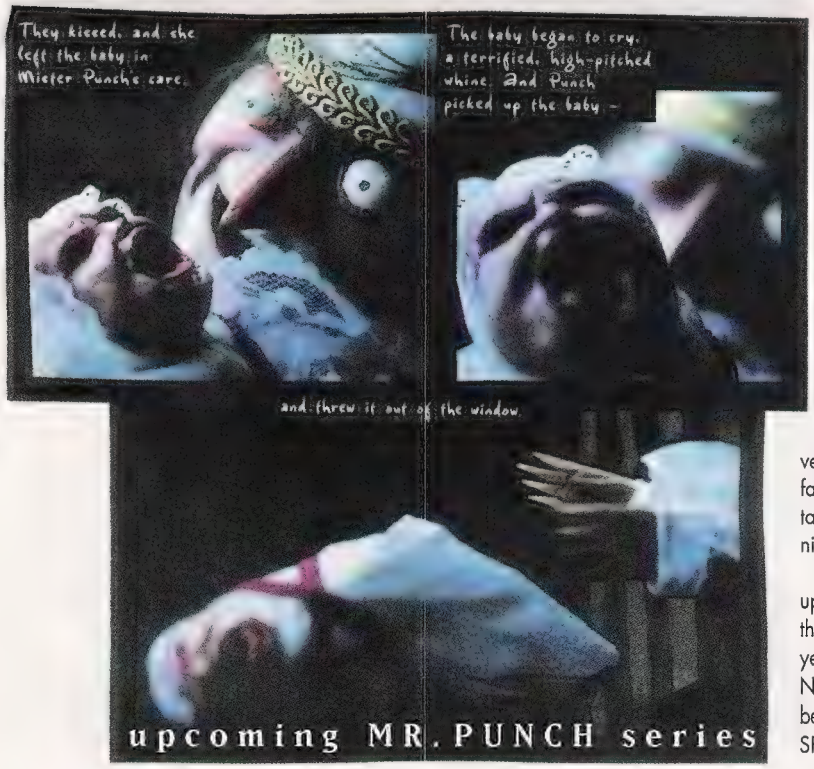
"I discovered that [Eclipse has] been telling people over the years that the reason why *Miracleman* was always so incredibly late was that Mark Buckingham and I were so incredibly unprofessional and unreliable. It was just that we wouldn't start a new issue of *Miracleman* until we were paid for the last one." Rumors of the sale of *Miracleman* to another company run rampant, but with the rights subject to many conflicting claims, nothing is likely to develop in the near future.

Sweeney Todd, which began in the latest issue of Steve Bissette's anthology series *Taboo,* will continue, although the format is still subject to an ultimate decision, as is the publisher. "Michael Zulli and I own that. We've put together an outline, and when time permits, we will send my agent off to sell it."

Gaiman short stories

The fall of 1994 will see several new projects, including the 96-page hardcover graphic novel *Mr. Punch,* another Gaiman/McKean collaboration, to be published in the U.S. by DC. Told entirely from the point of view of a young boy, this semi-autobiographical tale of family secrets, and innocence betrayed, focuses on a mysterious hunchbacked uncle, a morose mermaid, and that most British of entertainments, the Punch and Judy puppet show.

Mr. Punch, like so many of Gaiman's other works, particularly *The Children's Crusade* #1 and "A Game of You," is about the betrayal of childhood. When asked why he so often returns to this theme, Gaiman says, "I suppose having children as protagonists still fascinates me. Every child is trapped in a world they did not create, and have no power in, except for whatever power they manage to carve out for themselves. Every child is in a world that they do not understand, and they have to learn and make it up as they go along. And writing from a child's eye view, I can palm so many cards while writing it. It's a complete pleasure, because the author is, from his perspective, at all times being completely honest with you, except he doesn't know most of what's going on. You wind up [being] given more than the child sees and less than the adult narrator knows."



upcoming MR. PUNCH series

PLEASING AN Audience of One

On the other end of the spectrum, Image Comics will be publishing the three-issue *Angela* mini-series, featuring the angelic warrior who first appeared in Gaiman's guest-written *Spawn* #9. The mini-series—like this article—really owes its existence to Mikey Gaiman, who, according to Gaiman, "thinks it's a terrible pity that he has this father who writes comics, and doesn't write any for him. He asks, 'Why don't you write an *X-Men*? I'd be proud of you if you could write an *X-Men*.'"

One day, Image co-founder Todd McFarlane faxed drawings of the proposed Angela toy to Gaiman, who, in turn, showed the faxes to Mikey, who said, "This is cool! You created this character?" Gaiman found a copy of *Spawn* #9, which Mikey read, and afterwards asked his dad, "Are you going to do any more of this?" *Angela,* incidentally, will be dedicated to Mikey, while *Mr. Punch* is dedicated to Gaiman's younger daughter Holly.

As for the story, he laughs and says, "It's not exactly a theological fantasy in the way 'Season of Mists' was, except it's full of these high-tech angels all shouting, hitting, and running around. Nobody ever stops to have a deep and meaningful conversation. If it makes Mikey go 'Cool!' or even 'Awesome!' then I know it's worked. Spawn is a lot of fun to write, too. There's a level of cheerful self-pity and baffled incomprehension about the character, at least whenever I write him."

Finally, Gaiman has laid the groundwork for a universe of comics scheduled to begin publication in the fall by Tekno•Comix, the comics division of BIG Entertainment. The experience has given him an opportunity to return to an early love.

"It's really rather odd. Am I puzzled that I grew up to be a writer? No. Am I occasionally puzzled that I did not grow up to be a hard SF writer? Well, yeah, I suppose I am. I expected that I'd be a Larry Niven when I grew up, and I'm obviously not. I couldn't be Larry Niven if my life depended on it. Tekno wanted SF stuff, and it was fun coming up with ideas for

™ & © Neil Gaiman. Photo by Harry Peterson.

comics that nobody else has done or is doing."

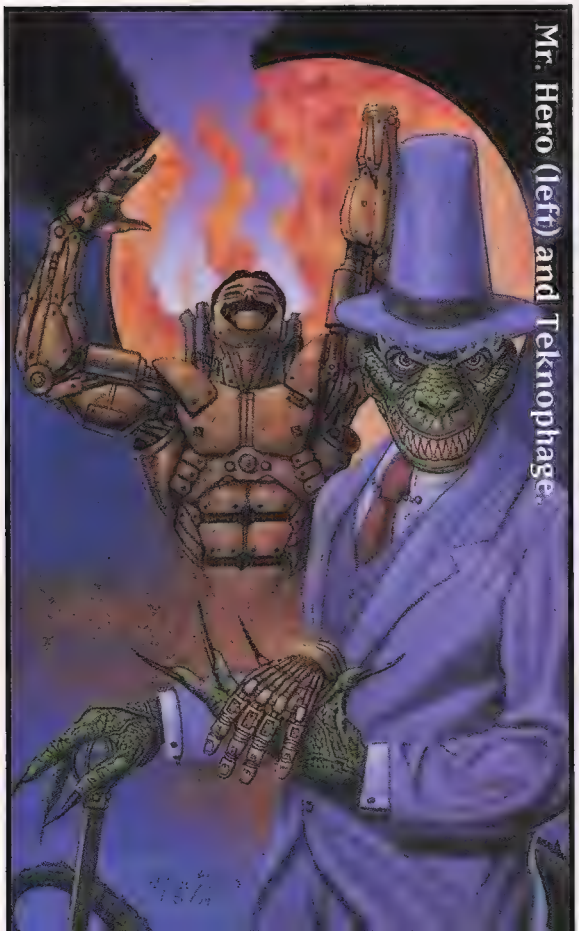
November will see the debut of *Mr. Hero—The Newmatic Man*, a story about a Victorian steam-powered, mechanical pugilist, who John Maskelyne, a Victorian magician, demonstrated—although the origin of this pugilist is a mystery. Mr. Hero had two heads—a pugilist head and a ratiocinator (reasoning) head. He'd do a demonstration where he'd box with a member of the audience, then they'd unscrew the pugilist head and put on the thinker head, steam would come out of his pipe, and he'd answer questions. Unfortunately, one day he broke someone's jaw in the ring, and was then put in a box. 110 years later, a young lady activates him, and he steps into the 1990s with all the attitudes, good and bad, of Victorian England. Jim (*Kings in Disguise*) Vance will write it, and Ted (*Jazz Age Chronicles*) Slampyak and Bob (*New Mutants*) McLeod will illustrate.

Then there's *Teknophage*, which—Gaiman hastens to explain—is a real word, meaning "eater of children." He describes him as "the last of the dinosaurs, probably responsible for their extinction. He's very old and very nasty. It's kind of a steampunk horror title, very strange." Rick (*Bratpack*) Veitch will be writing the book. Also in development are *The Recombinant*, about a character who is impossible to kill, and *Lady Justice*, which is "basically about a blindfold," Gaiman notes.

"What I've tried to do in each case," Gaiman points out, "was to create something that genuinely didn't exist in the world of comics. It's the kind of thing I just never get the opportunity to do. No one at DC ever comes to me and says 'Create!' I always have more ideas and more characters than I can ever use."

Perhaps if he hadn't recited all those poems to his mother when he was three, or read all those books in the library as a child, his head wouldn't be so full of ideas. But the comic world is all the better for it, and if one day, Mikey enters his father's room and starts reciting poetry, it's a sure bet that Neil Gaiman will be listening intently. And the dream may live on... ☆

Paul J. Grant is a Michigan-based freelance writer.



Mr. Hero (left) and Teknophage.

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(SiDebAr)

VERTIGO EDITOR Karen Berger

Life (and Death) After Sandman

With *Sandman* coming to a conclusion, how will Vertigo go about replacing its hottest seller? This question weighs heavily on Vertigo Executive Editor Karen Berger's mind these days.

"We have a number of things planned with Neil [Gaiman], including other mini-series involving [members of] the Endless," she reports. "The first planned is *Death: The Time of Your Life*, with [artist] Chris Bachalo, coming out immediately after *Sandman* ends. Then he'll be doing *Delirium* with [artist] Jill Thompson. We're also very close to signing a deal with Neil and [artist] Charles Vess on a creator-owned four-issue prestige series."

Vertigo will also launch a new monthly series in early '96, called *The Dreaming*, featuring none of the Endless but concentrating on pre-existing DC Comics/Vertigo supernatural characters like Cain and Abel, Lucien, Eve, and the Three Witches. Gaiman is actively involved as a consultant on the book.

"*The Dreaming* is in no way a sequel to or a continuation of *Sandman*," Berger explains. "It's a new book unto itself, using The Dreaming as Neil established it as a set-up. Surely Neil would be the first to say he only tapped into a portion of what you could do with a concept like dreams. There are pockets and civilizations and worlds that we haven't explored yet."

The Dreaming, like *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*, will be done by different writer/artist teams handling each storyline. Dave McKean will be doing the covers.

"*Sandman* is a phenomenon, and I would love for phenomenons to happen all the time, but you can't plan for them," Berger notes. "At Vertigo, we're very carefully viewing the situation and planning to have strong monthlies that will bring people back to the stores on a regular basis, like *Hellblazer*, *Sandman Mystery Theatre*, *The Books of Magic*, and *Shade, the Changing Man*."

Berger also notes that DC owns *Sandman*, both legally and contractually, and could continue the title without Gaiman. "But why should we?" she asks. "DC is not Marvel Comics. DC, for a big company that's part of a huge corporation like Time-Warner, has a very 'small company, family' attitude when it comes to creators and their properties and creator relationships."

—Paul J. Grant

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A complete set of color keys from *Lord Pumpkin* #0, as well as a copy of *Lord Pumpkin* #0, both signed by Dan Danko and Aaron Lopresti! If that's not enough of ol' pumpkin head, then howsabout a complete set of all Ultraverse comics featuring Lord Pumpkin, as well?

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Third Prize (50 winners)
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For the names of the winners, available after January 20, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Lord Pumpkin Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

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"All-righty guys! We got only five minutes to eat my whole head!"
***Jared Evetas**, Omaha, NE*

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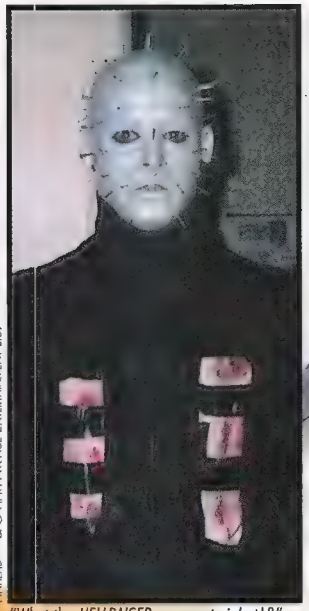
"This web-swinging stuff would be alot easier without 20 gallons of 'stuff' in my pants!"
***Demetrio Ortiz**, Spring, TX*

Up with No Place to Go



"Wh at the *HELLRAISER* are you starin' at!?"
John M. Gregory, *Camden, SC*

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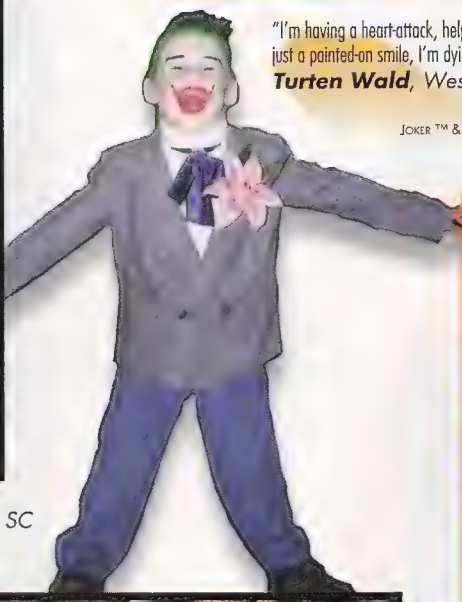
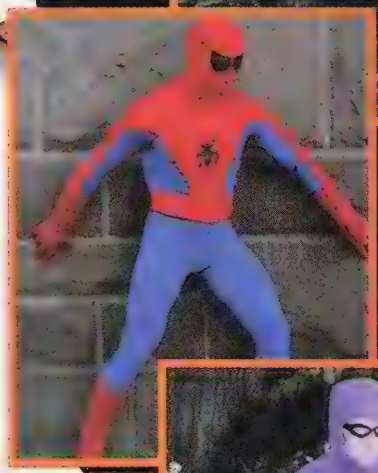


"I'm having a heart-attack, help me! This is just a painted-on smile, I'm dying...HELP ME!!"
Turten Wald, *West Allis, WI*

JOKER ™ & © DC COMICS



SPIDER-CLONE ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

"Spider-Clone guy, Spider-Clone guy, does whatever a Spider-Clone guy can. Spins a web, any size. Sucks real bad, you know why...!"
Paul Rogus, *Burbank, CA*

WAY-TOO-MUCH-FREE-TIME AWARD
Richard McCaslin, *Zanesville, OH*
Hey, let's hear it for the *Wizard* fans who have way too much free time and know how to sew. (Sew? Sew? C'mon, ditch that sissy sewing gig and do something manly, like get into a bar fight or something.) For going the extra mile, Rich here walks off with a copy of *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, *Marvels* #2 and #4 signed by Alex Ross, a *Gen13* #1 signed by Brandon Choi, a *Gen13* #1/2, a Gold *Maxx* #1/2, and a set of the ten oversized Fleer Flair prints!
SPIDER-MAN, WOLVERINE, AND CAPTAIN AMERICA ™ & © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP. THE PHANTOM ™ & © KING FEATURES SYNDICATE.

"We hate what you hate, and we hate you!"
Dan Korbas, *Woodstock, IL* & **Justin Bill**, *Clarendon Hills, IL*

Milk and Cheese™ & © Evan Dorkin

Gambit™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

What if...Archie Bunker was an X-Man?
Dustin Owen, *Burbank, CA*

Madman™ & © Mike Allred

"I'm waiting for the mail, man. Get it? Mail-man!? Get it? My *mom* thinks I'm funny.
Matt Abbott, Sacramento, CA

THE WHAT-WERE-YOU-THINKING? AWARD
Mark Maas, Dubuque, IA
All right. Let's hear it for the *Wizard* fan willing to light his head on fire to win some free crap. WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU? "WHAT IS YOUR MAJOR MALFUNCTION, PRIVATE PYLE?" Actually, "Mad" Mark Maas here assures us his head really isn't on fire. That's good. For pulling off this stunt and not ending up looking like Captain Pike, Mark wins a copy of *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, *Marvels* #2 and #4 signed by Alex Ross, a *Gen13* #1 signed by Brandon Choi, a *Gen13* #1/2, a Gold *Maxx* #1/2, a Batman SkyDisc from the Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight card set, and a First Aid kit. Oh yeah...READERS: DO NOT TRY THIS AT HOME. Got it?
Ghost Rider™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

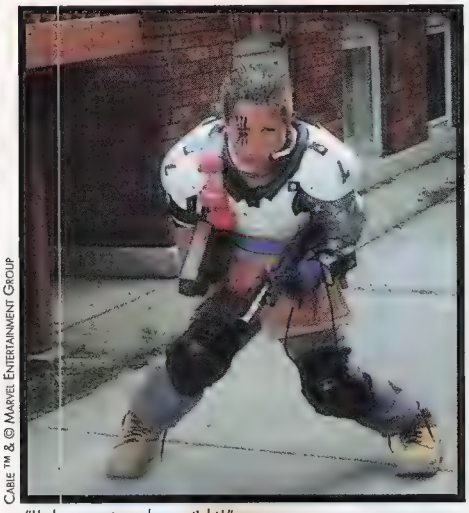
Spider-Man™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

"Arrrgh! Head...mutating. Growing...too big. Must...stop..."
Chad Lewis McDade, Woodbridge, VA

Indiana Jones ™ & © Lucasfilms Ltd.

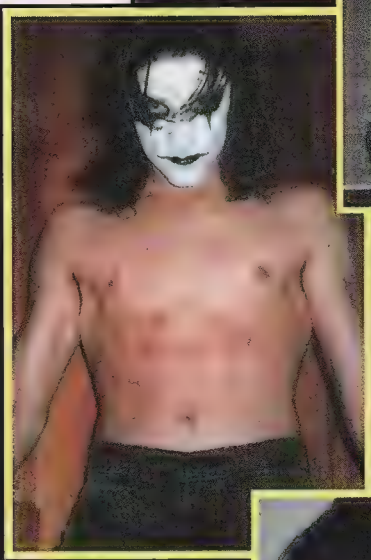
"Follow me. My dad keeps a bunch of cool fireworks and gasoline down here in the basement."
***John DeLuca**, Harleysville, PA*

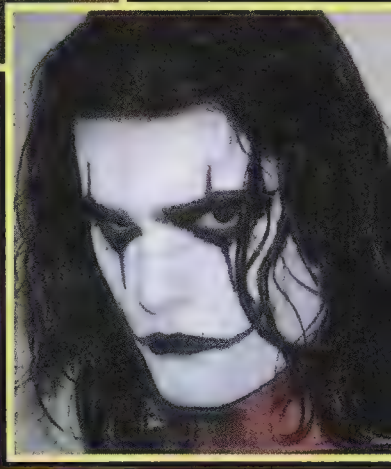
"Hey, lookit me, lookit me! I'm like a baby Catwoman, I'm marketable! I'm marketable!"
***Ashley Pyzik**, Berwyn, IL*
Catwoman ™ & © DC Comics



Cable ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

"Underwear...too...damn...tight!"
***Blake MacGregor (costume by brother Andrew)**, River Forest, IL*





Scarecrow ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

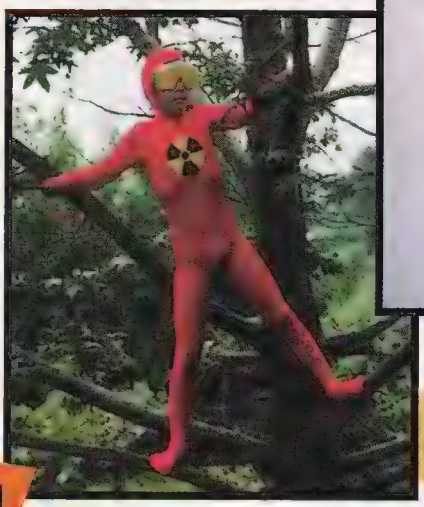
"Medium rare, you say? Let me just flip these over."
***Shawn Mangrum**, Jonesboro, AR*

COSTUMES TO CROW ABOUT!
***Martin C. Walsh**, Sunnyvale, CA*
***Connie Bennett**, Fredericksburg, VA*
***Enrico Botta**, Sewell, NJ*
***Paul J. Angeli**, Fremont, CA*

What the hell?!? Was there a sale on white face paint this month or are all the *Wizard* readers mimes? (We hope not. The only thing worse than mimes are the French, and we've managed to keep both out of the magazine so far.) We got like 50 fans entering as the Crow, and while he's real cool and everything, enough is enough. Anyway, each of these four Crows wins a copy of *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, *Marvels* #2 and #4 signed by Alex Ross, a *Gen*^{13} #1 signed by Brandon Choi, a *Gen*^{13} #1/2, and a Gold *Maxx* #1/2! Enrico "I've got an innie" Botta wins all that stuff plus a mysterious Crow Care Package (Oooooo...). The Crow ™ & © Crow Vision Inc. and Miramax Films

"Hey, wall-crawler!
Say hi to my colon when you get there."
***Bryan Goff**, Brunswick, GA*

Venom TM & © Marvel Entertainment Group



Solar TM & © Voyager Communications, Inc. & Western Publishing Co. Inc.

Ooops, somebody's Solar kite got stuck in a tree. Throw a rock at it to get it down.
***Alex Lisic**, Cookeville, TN*

Captain America TM & © Marvel Entertainment Group

"Nobody told me about this Super Soldier Serum side-effect, damn it!"
***Kyle Holland**, Meridian, MS*

Vampirella TM & © Harris Publications Inc.

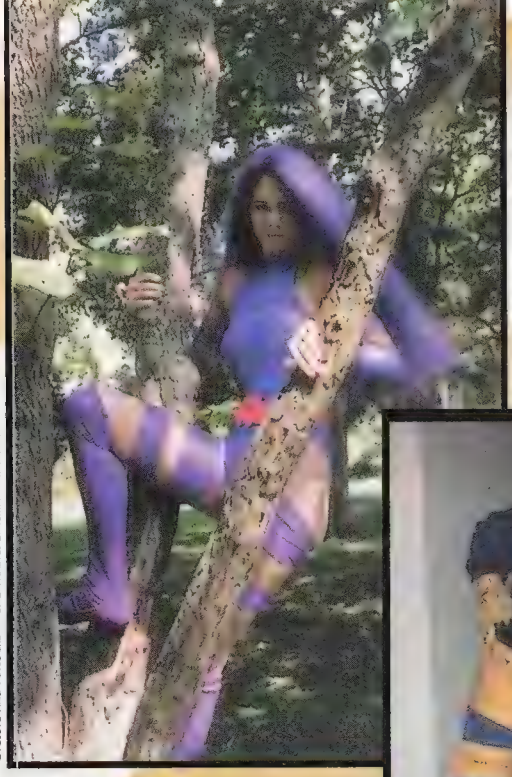
"Hey, when we're done with the pictures, wanna dig up a corpse and chuck it on the highway?"
***Paula** (last name withheld), Indianapolis, IN*

MORTAL KOSTUMES!

*Rayden—**Jason Dooley**, Fayetteville, GA*
*Scorpion—**Martin Eyestone**, Perham, MN*
*Sub-Zero—**P.J. Kauffman**, Maple Shade, NJ*
*Smoke—**Jonathan King**, Brevard, NC*

Finish him! Out of about 20 M.K. II kostume entries (With no Barakas! What's wrong with you people?), here's the koolest Kombatants. Each of these wild warriors wins a kopy of *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, *Marvels* #2 and #4 signed by Alex Ross, a *Gen*^{13} #1 signed by Brandon Choi, a *Gen*^{13} #1/2, and a Gold *Maxx* #1/2! For that neat trick with his eyes, Jason "Rayden" Dooley wins all that stuff plus a signed gold-edition *Mortal Kombat* #1. (And hey, we wanna see some Street Fighter II kos—uh...costumes next year, or there's gonna be trouble.)

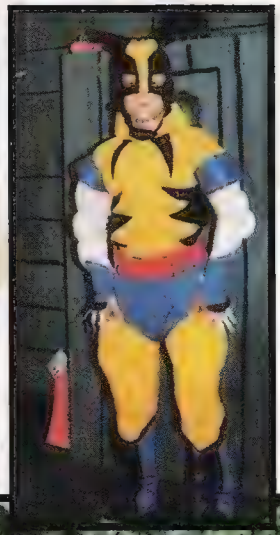
Mortal Kombat II TM & © Midway/Bally



Cyclops and Psylocke ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

"As a demonstration of my ninja prowess, I'll remain completely motionless, thus blending with my surroundings and disappearing...see?"
***Dawn Northington**, Madison, TN*

He's the best there is at what he does, but it sure as hell aint dressin' himself.
***Marc Eric Meade**, Adams, WI*



Wolverine ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

"So, wadda ya say, babe? I'll ditch my red-headed old lady, and you and me go for a ride?"
***Scott Hockers**, Minnetonka, MN*

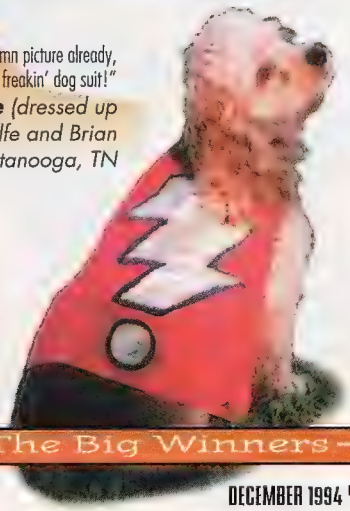
Batman and Robin ™ & © DC Comics

Ughhh...just when you thought *Batman 3* couldn't get any worse.
***Daniel & Joshua Kelley**, Prince Frederick, MD*

"Hey kid, if that ball comes in my yard one more time, I'll run you through!"
***Zach Terflinger**, La Mirada, CA*

Grendel ™ & © Matt Wagner

"Take the damn picture already, I'm dyin' in this freakin' dog suit!"
***Caddie Belle** (dressed up by Laura Wolfe and Brian Prater), Chattanooga, TN*



The Big Winners →

Golden Age Sandman ™ & © DC Comics

THIRD PRIZE—GOLDEN AGE SANDMAN

***Ken Stacks**, Pueblo, CO*

A lot of that stuff looks store-bought, but seeing how it all came from unrelated areas, how cool the background scenery fits in with the photo and just how cool Ken looks, he clocks in at number three. Way to go, man. Ken walks off with a *Hulk* #418 signed by Peter David, a *Vengeance of Vampirella* #2 signed by Buzz, *Marvels* #2 and #4 signed by Alex Ross, a Gold *Maxx* #1/2, a Limited Edition *Rune* #0, a *Gen13* #1 signed by Brandon Choi, a *Gen13* #1/2, and the five-card Spider-Man 30th Anniversary card set. Now try and get some sleep, Ken.

Stormtroopers ™ & © Lucasfilms Ltd.

SECOND PRIZE—STORMTROOPERS

***Derek Oswandel & Roger Baugh**, Harrisburg, PA*

It's gotta be a real pain in the ass when you gotta take a crap while wearing one of them 'trooper suits. No wonder they're always shooting Jawas and Ewoks; they're just about as crabby as you can get. Anyway, Derek and Roger here will have to split their prize of *Marvels* #0, #3, and #4 signed by Alex Ross, a *WildStar* #1 signed by Jerry Ordway and Al Gordon, a *Kindred* #1 signed by Brett Booth, an *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, a Gold *Maxx* #1/2, a *Gen13* #1/2, a *Gen13* #1 signed by Brandon Choi, an *X-O Manowar* #0 signed by Joe Quesada, and the five-card Spider-Man 30th Anniversary card set. Now get back to work before you piss off Darth Vader, guys.

Predator ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp.

GRAND PRIZE—PREDATOR

"Hello my baby, hello my honey, hello my ragtime gal..."

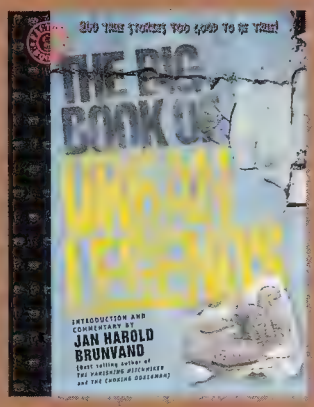
***Tom Klymiuk and Rich Hartle**, Lakewood, OH*

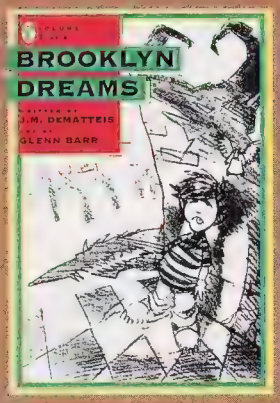
Hats off to Tom and Rich for going the distance and pulling the grand prize win! So what exactly made these costume freaks pick Predator? Well, according to Tom, "I was looking in last year's costumes. I saw the Predator one that sucked, and said, 'I'll make a better one.'" It took Tom (who wears the costume) and Rich six months to make their awesome Predator costume out of a number of common objects, including cardboard, hot glue, and foam. The hair was made from plastic bags tied with string, the helmet from a combination of cardboard and papier-maché, and the spear from dowel rods. All those teeny-weeny little circuits on his arms are just hot glue and extra circuit parts, and the rest is body paint. Wow! These guys must've spent a fortune on glue! The two have already gotten a jump on their next costume: Samus from the game *Super Metroid*.

Aside from winning 175 pounds (Tom's body weight) of nummy-rific candy, these two master craftsmen mosey away with copies of *Marvels* #0 and #2-#4 signed by Alex Ross, a Gold *Darker Image* #1 signed by Sam Kieth, a *Kindred* #1 signed by Brett Booth, an *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, a *Gen13* #1 signed by Brandon Choi, a *Brigade* #0 signed by Jeff Matsuda, a *Lady Death Swimsuit Special* signed by Brian Pulido, a *Bloodstrike* #1 signed by Dan Fraga, a Limited Edition *Rune* #0 (Yeesh, this freakin' list goes on forever!), a Gold *Maxx* #1/2, a *Gen13* #1/2, a Hardcase CD-Romix, a set of the Fleer X-Men Masterprints, the five-card Spider-Man 30th Anniversary card set, and finally, the soft-vinyl King Kong model kit. (Whew! A lotta stuff, but you guys earned it. Now no fighting, and split up the stuff evenly!)

AND THAT'S THAT. THANKS TO ALL WHO ENTERED, CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO WON, AND WE'LL SEE Y'ALL BACK HERE AGAIN NEXT YEAR. ¡ADIOS!

THE BEST REASON YET TO READ COMICS.





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YOUR MIND WON'T BELIEVE YOUR EYES

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She-Hulk & Wonder Man™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Babe—DIVA

Wow! That's some lack of costume Diva's sportin' there. If I were a teammate of hers in StormWatch, I really don't think I'd get all that much done. I'd be too busy wondering about all sorts of scenarios involving four quarts of oil and a Slip-and-Slide™. And hey, nice thong. Does it ever...hey, how long must it take to wash hair like that? And where do you put it when you go to the bathroom? Boy, the heroes of today sure face challenges their Golden Age counterparts never even dreamed of. Uh...whoop. Went off on a tangent. Sorry. Aside from her looks, figure, creamy smooth skin, and awesome freakin' hair, Diva's also got all sorts of special government clearance, so odds are that if you date her, she'll be able to get rid of your parking tickets and stuff—maybe even get you Paula Jones's autograph.

Diva ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions

Steel ™ & © DC Comics

Hunk—STEEL

My, he's certainly a strapping young man. Ooo, and he has an earring, too—how macho! Yes indeedy, this here Steel fella may have been the crappiest of the four Supermen introduced back when the true Supes was suckin' wind—er, make that *not* sucking wind—but gracious, he certainly can fill out a tank top and a pair of Levis™! To round out this hunky package, John Henry Irons (that's Steel's secret identity!) is one smart chunk of beef as well. Y'see, baldy here created that ultraspiffy suit of steel long johns that he wears when he's buzzin' around clobberin' bad guys. And can you believe it? The guy's not even married. Wow, strong *and* smart. Solid! ☆

MEET KYLE BLACKTHORNE THE MOST LETHAL WEAPON IN THE UNIVERSE...

FALL '94

AND NOW HE'S COME HOME TO TAKE OUT THE TRASH.

BLACKTHORNE

Interplay

BLIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT

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the Drawing board

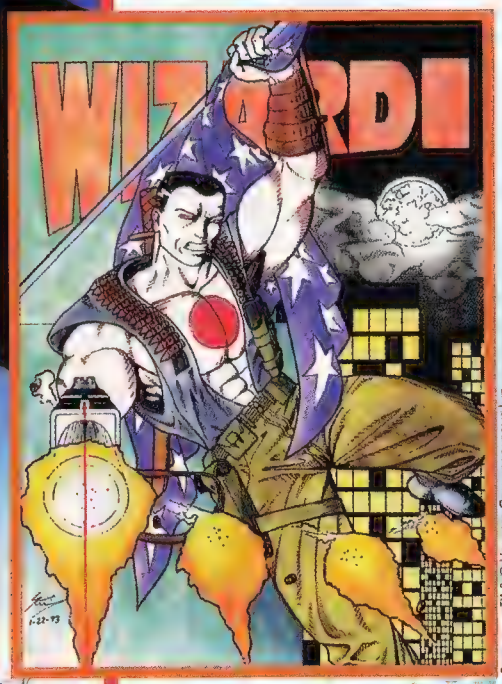
The showcase of comic book fan art.

The 10 people whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive an *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, a *Kindred* #1 signed by Brett Booth, and a *Lynch Mob* #1 signed by Brian Pulido. The four runners-up will each receive an *Incredible Hulk* #418 signed by Peter David, a *Dr. Mirage* #1 signed by Bernard Chang, and an *X-O Manowar* #0 signed by Joe Quesada. The artist of the winning entry this month will receive an *X-Men* #30 signed by Andy Kubert, copies of *Uncanny X-Men* #308-#310 signed by Dan Green, and a *Gen*[13] #1 signed by Brandon Choi and Alex Garner. Congratulations to all!

Special thanks to Dynamic Forces for their generous donation of autographed comic books. You guys are…the…the (I'm running out of adjectives) beef?

GRAND PRIZE

SPARTAN
By Chris Battle
Santa Monica, CA



BLOODSHOT
By Steve Kim
Torrance, CA

Bloodshot ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.

Spartan ™ & © Aegis Entertainment DBA WildStorm Productions. Image and WildC.A.T.s logotypes ™ & © Image Comics.
(M', what a large chin you have!)

Death ™ & © DC Comics. Sin City ™ & © Frank Miller.

RUNNER-UP

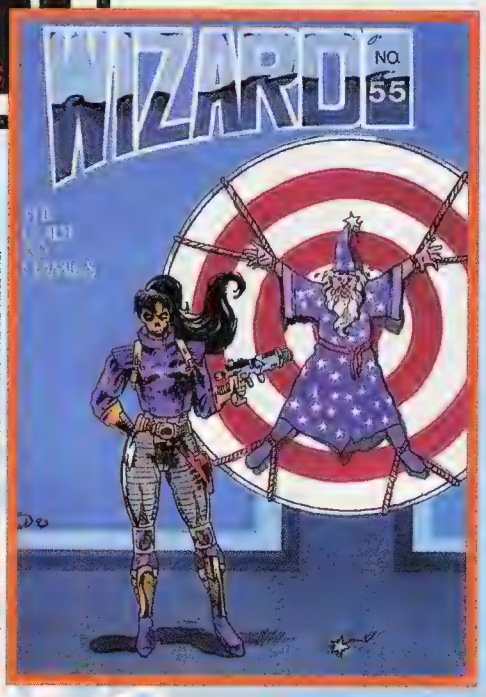
DEATH, SIN CITY STYLE
By Anthony Smith
Seattle, WA

Captain America and his gal pal Diamondback ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

CAPTAIN AMERICA AND DIAMONDBACK
By Doug Lau
Bakersfield, CA

Opus ™ & © Berke Breathed

OPUS
By Ryan McCabe
North Scituate, RI



Killjoy ™ & © Top Cow Productions Inc. Poof ™ & © Wizard Press Inc.

KILLJOY & POOF
By Robert Dacus
Denver, CO

Batman ™ & © DC Comics. Punisher ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

BATMAN AND THE PUNISHER
By Jairo Paez
Bogota, Colombia

Calvin ™ & © Bill Watterson

SPACE CALVIN
By Thomas Correa
Bronx, NY

RUNNER-UP

HASTA LA VISTA, DOOMSDAY!
By Doug McGregor
Pointe Claire, Quebec, Canada

The Simpsons and all related characters ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. Superman and Doomsday ™ & © DC Comics.

All characters depicted ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

MARVEL BRATS
By ?????
(Hey, you! Artist person! See what happens when you don't write or attach your name and address onto the back of your art? Shame, shame! Everyone should take this as a lesson, and the mystery artist should contact us A.S.A.P.!)

X-O Manowar ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.

RUNNER-UP

X-O MANOWAR
By Thom Williamson
Bristol, CT

MAGNUS VS. G33
By Gregory Lunzer
Robbinsdale, MN

Magnus Robot Fighter and all related characters ™ & © Western Publishing Inc.

Usagi Yojimbo ™ & © Stan Sakai

RUNNER-UP

SPACE USAGI
By Joseph D. Paris
New Albany, IN

LOOK OUT, MAGNUS!
By Piemonte Marco
Roma, Italy

Magnus Robot Fighter ™ & © Western Publishing Inc.

Hellboy ™ & © Mike Mignola. Marv ™ & © Frank Miller.

HELLBOY & MARV
By Stephanie Cummings
Orlando, FL

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:
The Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, bloody finger, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend, or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. Please enclose your name and full address. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good luck!

Hi-dee-doo-doo again, fellow comic artistimondos! This month is the second in my three-part series on anatomy, and I'll be discussing muscles, mass, and weight, and how to make these work for you. Last month, I went over proportion and depth, so that you'd all have a well-defined basic structure for putting the muscles on, and next month I'll be going over motion, poses, and twisting (not specifically the dance, although you shouldn't quote me). So, without further ado, on to this month's lesson!

BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH

BART SEARS

ANATOMY 202

SECTION 1:

First of all, a quick refresher on proportion. My trusty Webster tells me that proportion is "the relation of one part to another or to the whole with respect to magnitude, quantity, or degree." In a sense, proportion is very similar to anatomy—which is the spatial relationship among body parts—but proportion deals with the size of shapes, as well as how they relate to one another. Examine the two sets of ellipses at the bottom. Both sets have the same three ellipse sizes, but in a different relationship. That, in an extremely abstract way, is proportion.

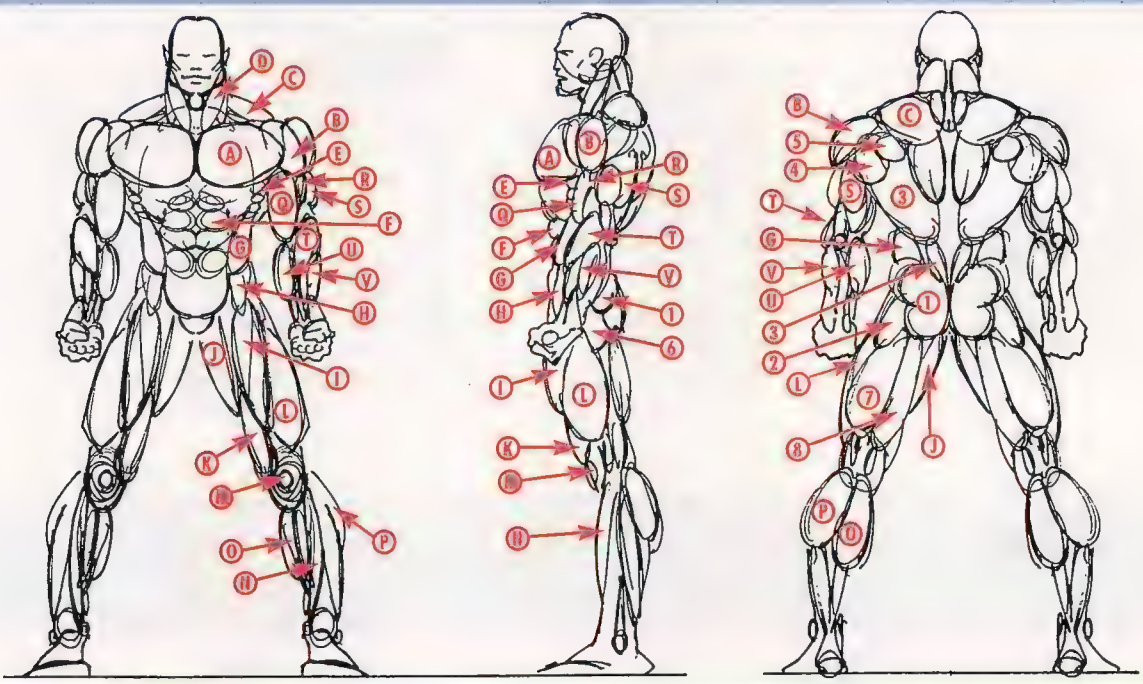
BRUTE & BABE ™ & © BART SEARS. ALL ARTWORK AND CHARACTERS ™ & © BART SEARS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. TEXT © BART SEARS.

MUSCLE

SECTION 2:

Ready for Webster again? A muscle is "an organ consisting of long cells that contract when stimulated, and function in moving a body part." The two key phrases from this definition that apply to comics are "contract" and "moving a body part." The sole function of muscles is to move a body part; whether it's another muscle, your forearm, or your eyeball, muscles move them all. Muscles can only do this by contracting or shortening, so in most areas we have opposing muscles, which work as a team to move a body part back and forth. A good example of this occurs in the upper arm. The biceps, which is a muscle on the top of the arm, works to bend the arm at the elbow by contracting. The triceps, which is another muscle, lays opposite the biceps on the bottom of the arm, and causes the arm to straighten back out again. Get it? If not, just flex in the mirror for a while until you do, or until whoever lives with you tells you to stop. Something else that's important with a muscle is that it has a constant volume, and so when it contracts along its length, it actually gets larger in every other dimension. Picture yourself squeezing a balloon. The balloon always possesses the same volume, but as you squeeze it (which is what contracting does, but from the inside, not the outside), it expands every place your hands aren't. That's why muscles look bigger when flexed: they are doing just what the balloon is doing. Any artist should make sure this shows up in the comics.

Now I'll go over the bubble method of laying down muscles on figures. When laying out the muscles, draw loose bubbles, usually oval-shaped bubbles, where the muscles would go. This allows you to determine exactly where all the muscles should go and how they would look in the finished figure. The bubble figure should be rough and loose; you can polish it up later in your finished pencils. Here's a look at some bubble layouts for a three-view of a figure:



SECTION 3:

Bubble muscles—you've just got to love 'em!! Check out the three figures above.

Notice that they are essentially the same figure, even though they're drawn from three different angles. They look this way because they have the same proportion and mass. Remember this when drawing comics—I have sometimes fallen into a trap of suddenly drawing a hero quite a bit larger or smaller (usually larger) than I previously did. I find this happens when my brain shuts down.

Notice the little letters and numbers on corresponding bubble muscle parts. Check these drawings out, study, copy—whatever it is YOU do to learn...and learn. Note that I'm not particularly concerned with the correct names of all of the muscles, or even with their full names. I've even grouped some muscle sets together as I pleased. My goal here is to teach anatomy to comic book artists, not doctors or somebody who really needs to know his gluteus maximus from his triceps. This is somewhat simplified, and I haven't labeled everything, but it should give you a good strong base.

A - pecs
B - delts
C - trapezius
D - cool neck mastoid
E - serratusaurs
F - abdominals
G - obs
H - cool leg/hip tensor
I - the fem
J - thick-inner-thigh-musculous
K - vastly cool
L - vastly more cool
M - kneecap (note: this is not a muscle)
N - tibia muscle
O - big calf muscle
P - little calf muscle
Q - biceps
R - that little muscle between the biceps and the triceps
S - triceps
T - cool forearm extensor
U - the carp
V - other cool forearm extensor, but smaller and maybe longer
1 - buttocks
2 - spine muscle
3 - lats
4 - lower shoulder blade muscle
5 - upper shoulder blade muscle
6 - the maxx (sorry, Sam)
7 - cool thigh biceps
8 - smaller cool thigh biceps

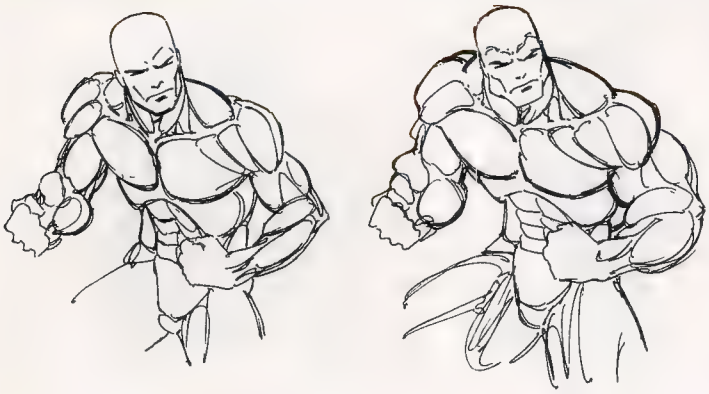
Now, your mission:

Find a REAL anatomy book, look up the REAL names for these important muscle groups, and use them if you want...(personally, I like "the fem" better than "rectus femoris," but to each his own, ya know? The important thing is to learn. Use what works and trash what doesn't (but at least draw it right).

MASS

SECTION 4:

Here's the dictionary again: mass is "a quantity or aggregate of matter, usually of considerable size; bulk." In other words, a mass is a large amount of stuff. I'll refer to mass in terms of how much matter is involved. For instance, large mass would be the Space Shuttle and small mass would be a newt. Get the idea? Mass in comic anatomy deals with the size of body parts, usually muscles, but also bones and fat. What I'll be talking about for mass right now deals mostly with muscle. A muscle can have different mass in different people, and usually does. However, there are two rules you should make sure to follow when working with mass. First of all, whether a person is massive or not doesn't change the fact that ALL people have the same muscles, and most of us have our musculature developed to the point where all of our muscles have a similar relative mass. For instance, a hero would normally not have a massive set of arms and really slim-looking legs. The other rule is that just because mass changes from figure to figure, the proportions don't have to (but they can, of course). Changing the size of muscles doesn't change how they relate to each other. For instance, if I were to start working out heavily, I would theoretically become more massive. However, my basic proportions wouldn't change at all, because my underlying structure, my bone structure, and my inviolate understructure, would still be the same.



SECTION 5:

Check out the two bubble figures above. These two figures obviously have different masses, the one on the right having a larger mass than the one on the left. However, both of these figures have the same proportions, the same underlying structure. Whip out a piece of tracing paper if you don't believe me, and check it out. The two figures have the same muscles in the same places, and the same underlying bone structure, but with different masses. By understanding and applying what you now know about mass, it is simpler and easier to make characters of the same height appear completely different.

SECTION 6:

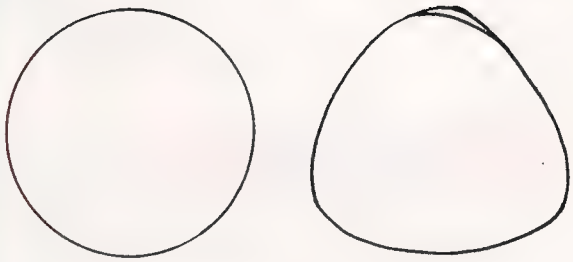
Below we have a drawing of Spidey and a drawing of Brute. They aren't in exactly the same position, but it's kinda close...who do you think has more mass? To blatantly steal a phrase, "'NUFF SAID!"

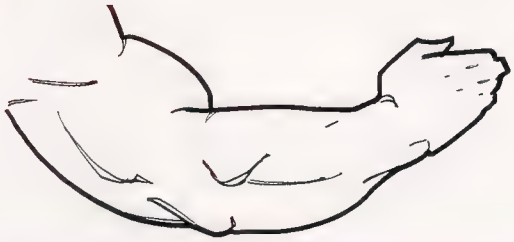
Spider-Man ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

WEIGHT

SECTION 7:

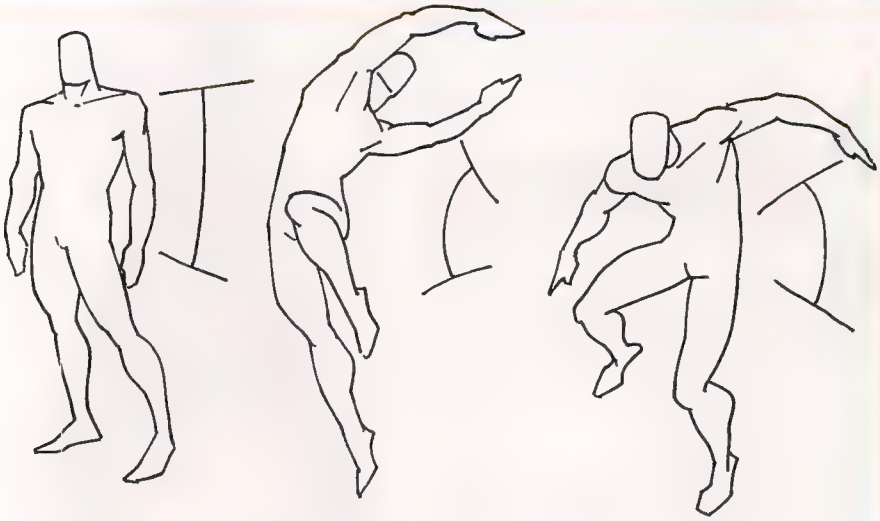
Which of the two figures on the right looks heavier? This is a very simple visual explanation of the effect of weight on an object. I could tell you that the sagging shape at the right—is simply the same circle, only heavier, and it would make sense. The visual appearance of weight depends heavily (Ha! Get it? Heavily?) on four factors. The first is the weight of the object—a heavier object will sag more. Second is the firmness of the object, because something that is firm won't have the flexibility to sag, and so its weight will show less (although it still must appear to be grounded and have weight). Gravity also plays a role, because stronger gravity will pull something down more, showing its weight more than it would at a weaker gravity. Lastly, and this deals exclusively with muscles, is whether or not the muscle is flexed. A flexed muscle is more rigid, and would only show its weight under very powerful gravity, while an unflexed muscle would sag under its own weight because it isn't firm enough when unflexed. Check this out in the drawings below and see what I mean.





SECTION 8:

Weight distribution is an important element that you should try to be aware of and use when drawing powerful and realistic comics. Weight distribution is how a figure carries its weight. A character which shifts limbs, like the arms and legs, keeps a relatively even distribution of weight. Weight distribution is used by everyone to keep their balance when doing any action, from walking to diving to lifting a child from the floor. We all shift parts of our body when doing any action, so that we don't fall over, or so we can perform an action more effectively. In comics, this weight distribution is shown by an opposition of the shoulders and hips, that is, positioning the shoulders and hips at opposite angles and orientations. The most obvious example of this opposition is when a walking person swings either arm in the opposite direction as the leg on the same side as the swinging arm. This swinging is the result of the hips and shoulders moving in the opposite directions. Try to walk and keep your shoulders and hips in line, and you'll see how that drops your balance to the point where you feel like you're going to fall over. By opposing the hips and shoulders of comic figures, you provide them with three things: a balanced look, a feeling of movement, and the sensation that gravity is present. Check out the drawings below to see what I mean.



CLOSING

I hope this helps you to put more life and power into your comics. This information is a little more complex than some of the material I've covered to date, so work through it and see what you can make of it. Again, thanks for reading this fountain of babbling incoherencies (some people call them words), and I hope you'll check out next month's article, where I'll be discussing more about twisting figures, posing, and motion. So until then, keep your pencils sharp and keep, keep, *keep* drawing!!!

Dear Brute & Babe

Mike Lynch, Age 18
Bridgeton, NJ

My name is Mike Lynch. I've sent work to you before and I entered your last contest, so if you keep files, I'm in there.

First of all, I want to thank you for giving out another plot to work from. I'm not really good at coming up with story ideas, but when I'm working off of someone else's writing, my work is a lot better. That's the main reason I'm writing this letter.

It seems that the only time I find myself drawing pages is when you write plots to work on. I don't think this is enough, especially when I am so desperate to break into comics. Well, I just want to ask you if it would be possible to put plots in your column every month, or even every two or three months. I usually read that editors want to see four to five pages of continuity. In *Wizard* #30, you said our submission should be roughly eight to 12 pages, so maybe you could use a page of your column to put four- to five-page plots. I'm sure this would benefit a lot of other artists, too. Make the plots so that they include action, quiet scenes, cars, telephones, trees, houses, and couches—well, you know what I mean.

I'm just giving a suggestion because your column has helped me so much already; I'm just trying to think of how it could help me more. I guess I've wasted enough of your time. Again, I want to thank you for all of the help you have given me, and I also want to thank you for listening.

You have a good idea, and starting this month, I'll make the writer's section (whatever I wind up calling it) a semi-regularly appearing section of this column.

William Dong
New York, NY

My name is William Dong and I'm almost out of high school. I am just like the many others, worried about finding a job in the comic field. I'm scared because it's a competitive field, and I don't know what to do. Maybe I'm just overworried. I have a few questions:

(1) What should I start doing now? (2) What kinds of materials do companies like Marvel, Image, Valiant, and Malibu look for? (3) I don't know what kinds of instruments to use, e.g. pens, pencils, paper, etc.?

Start drawing. Draw every minute of every day; draw everything that you see, and everything that you don't. Read art books. There is something of merit in all of them. Watch people; see how they move and twist and turn. Study films and comics. See what works and what doesn't. Try to follow the action without sound or by not reading the balloons and captions. See why you can follow a story and identify how you get lost...phew, I'm out of breath after all that, but I hope you get the picture. Comic book companies look for good drawing abilities, the ability to tell a story with pictures (or words, if you are a writer), good inking skills, etc. When you send them samples of your work, only send copies!!! Eight to 12 pages should do it. Don't send pin-ups—send examples of continuing stories, i.e. panel-to-panel action.

Work on bristol board, a type of drawing paper you can find at your local art store, with usually a two-ply (ask the clerk what that means) smooth or rough finish. You'll also need pencils, a ruler, a compass, ellipse templates, an eraser, India ink, drawing pens (technical and quill-type), sable hair watercolor brushes (there are many types), whiteout...there are no magic tools to make someone a comic book artist (I wish there were), but hard work and sweat usually pay off in the end. Good luck!

Gregory Brosh, Age 18
Mountaintop, PA

My friend and I were wondering what kind of work you put in your portfolio to get into the Joe Kubert School. I ask you this with the hope that it will give me an idea on what to put in mine. One more question: does the work have to be original or can some of it be copied?

Any artwork that you have ever done can be submitted in your portfolio, but only put in work that you are proud of. You may choose to show copied work (mimicry is a strong learning tool—no one learns to talk without it), but I think it would be a good idea to label it as a re-creation or study of someone else's work, and perhaps have originals ready so that the interviewer can compare your skills, if necessary.

The bottom line: don't try to pass someone else's work off as yours. First of all, it's dishonest and a slight to the original artist. Secondly, most people will know it for what it is...with that said, best of luck to you and your friend.

Little BRUTES & BABES

Oops—sorry, kids, nothing special this month, but try out these plots, because it's time for...

PLOTS AND MORE PLOTS!!!

Plot #1:

Page 1: Thor, flying towards us, waves farewell to a nameless woman, who is standing on the rooftop of a skyscraper in New York City. It is daylight, and Thor appears happy. Suddenly, a cosmic blast from above strikes Thor directly in the back, and sends him hurtling towards and into a brownstone house far below, reducing the building to rubble. We notice a condemned sign somewhere amidst the wreckage. Thor rises up out of the smoking rubble, quite enraged, and yells angrily as he sees his attacker (whom we cannot yet see).

Page 2: Splash page of a shot past an angry Thor, his fist tightly clenched on the haft of Mjolnir, and the Silver Surfer all ablaze with the power cosmic, soaring in on his board, obviously angry at Thor, for some as yet unknown reason. Cars are visible on the street in front of the wreckage of the brownstone, as are some pedestrians, who are hurriedly leaving the scene, in a panic.

Page 3: The Surfer yells something angrily at Thor, who yells right back. He's amazed the Surfer would attack in such a cowardly manner. Surfer zooms forward, power blazing, ready to do Thor in. Thor leaps into the fray, his Mjolnir swinging, blazing with whatever energy it possesses, equally ready to off the cowardly (or so he thinks) Surfer. They meet in a huge explosion of energy, which rocks the neighborhood street, knocking cars over and uprooting those small sidewalk trees, etc.

Page 4: Slowly, the smoke clears. We see a pretty huge crater in the street, lots of rubble and carnage. This block is basically decimated. A couple of people scurry from the scene. Standing in the center of the crater are two figures. We see that it is Thor and the Surfer, smoke still rising off of them, Thor's outfit somewhat ragged. Both heroes look the worse for wear, even winded and staggering. They exchange a hateful glance. The reader should fear the worst.

Plot #2:

Page 1:

panel 1—Captain Atom leans back in his chair in the JLE mansion, his hands behind his head, a smirk on his face.

panel 2—Establishing shot of Captain Atom's office, with CA sitting at his desk as in panel 1, the Crimson Fox pacing angrily in front of his desk. Metamorpho, sitting in a chair off to one side, hands folded across his chest, is also amused.

panel 3—Crimson Fox turns suddenly, one hand slashing through the air, angrily yelling at CA, who is still leaning back, smiling.

panel 4—Crimson Fox crosses her arms and clasps her hands to her shoulders, looking down, suddenly pouting.

panel 5—Shot past Crimson Fox to Metamorpho, who spreads his arms innocently, still smiling, not trying very hard to explain something to her.

panel 6—Crimson Fox surges towards Meta, who has suddenly sunk back as deeply as possible into his chair, startled, as the Fox screams what could be obscenities into his face.

Page 2:

panel 1—They all look up as the door bursts open and Ralph Dibny's head (from his elongated neck), his nose twitching, pops into the room, with one elongated hand having thrust open the door. He is obviously troubled and is yelling to the heroes to rush to the monitor room.

panel 2—Close-up of Ralph, urging them to hurry, nose twitching away.

panel 3—Metamorpho slips up out of the chair and nervously passes a fuming Crimson Fox, who has now crossed her arms angrily over her chest, to follow CA who is racing towards the door, where Ralph's free hand's index finger is motioning them forward.

panel 4—Close-up of the Fox, angry, but thinking.

panel 5—Shot of the Fox, hands on her hips, looking sexy, having come to a decision. Behind her, a nice shot of Cap's desk and the window behind it.

panel 6—Crimson Fox runs out of the room, following the others, who are out of sight by now.

Page 3 :

panel 1—Cool shot of the Fox, running through the halls of the mansion.

panel 2—Fox suddenly slows, as she sees Sue Dibny stumbling from the monitor room, obviously upset and crying.

panel 3—The Fox tries to console Sue, but Sue can only point disconsolately back towards the monitor room.

panel 4—Curiously, the Fox slowly walks towards the doorway, confused and a little afraid.

panel 5—At the doorway, the Fox stops, stunned, obviously seeing something inside the room that has shocked her.

Page 4 :

panel 1—Close-up of the Fox, tears streaming down her face, her hands raised in horror to her mouth.

panel 2—Shot past the Fox, to the monitor room, with all of its high-tech machinery. Ralph is walking slowly out of the room, very shaken, mumbling about finding Sue. Metamorpho stands angrily, fists clenched at his sides, almost defiant, struggling with his emotions. Cap has rested his hands on the back of the monitor chair, his back bowed, shoulders slumped forward, head down. Power Girl sits off to one side, slumped, hand to her eyes, emotion wracking her body. On the huge viewscreen in front of them is a shot of a grassy hill, with an enormous old tree. Under the tree lies Rocket Red, obviously dead, his body torn and shredded, his armor crumpled and useless. Kneeling next to him is the Flash, bent over, his body tormented with pain and anger.

CLOSING

Well, there you go. Two more plots to sink those new drawing teeth into. I hope you like them, but even if you don't, draw them anyway. I can guarantee you won't love every script, character, or job you ever have to do. Remember to approach things with a positive attitude, and you can achieve a great deal.

Till next we meet, keep on drawing!

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Barb Wire & The Machine ™ & © Dark Horse Comics Inc.

With the success of *The Mask*, Dark Horse is looking to develop *Barb Wire* (right) and *The Machine* (left) into motion pictures.

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

BY DAVE GALVAN

COMICS' GREATEST FILMS

The big news this month is Dark Horse's latest adventures in Hollywood. The company has deals to produce movies with various motion picture companies, most notably Universal. It has plans to develop several properties with the company, including Chris Warner's *Black Cross*, along with Comics' Greatest World's *The Machine*, *Barb Wire*, and *Pit Bulls*. Original films also in development with Dark Horse Entertainment and Universal include *Church League*, and the fantasy *Al and Gene*, the latter of which was scripted by Dark Horse publisher Mike Richardson and Mark Verheiden (*The Mask* and *Time Cop*). Also at Universal is *Virus*, written by Chuck Phferrar with Gale Ann Hurd producing. Hurd is best known for producing *Terminator 2* and *Aliens*, as well as being the former Ms. James Cameron. *Concrete*, another Universal project, is slated to be produced by Larry Gordon. Paul Chadwick and Larry Wilson are rewriting the script, and speculation tags Bill Murray in the lead role.

Not to be outdone, New Line Cinema is sitting down with Dark Horse Entertainment to work out a story for a sequel to *The Mask*. No big surprise here, as the film was one of New Line's major success stories. The company signed Jim Carrey for a sequel even before the first one was finished with post-production. Carrey's deal will make him a rich(er) man, as he'll make anywhere from $7 to $8 million off it.

The Mask cartoon series will air on CBS this spring, debuting with an hour-long episode, after which the show will move into its as-yet-to-be-determined time slot. Sunbow will produce the series, and earlier reports of CBS trying to get Jim Carrey to do the voice seem to be unlikely, now that he is a full-fledged film star.

FILM

It's official—Chris Columbus will direct a big-budget *Fantastic Four* movie for Neue Constantine. The story's had its sketchy moments, to say the least. At one point, Columbus was even quoted in the *L.A. Times* about his involvement as saying, "I have no idea what you are talking about." Now that Columbus is definitely set as the director, Neue Constantine head Bernd Eichinger has publicly stated that the only reason the Roger Corman film was made was that his rights to the film were set to expire—that is why the film *had* to be made. That's Hollywood!

Nexus: The Movie will be produced by Hanna-Barbera. Projected for 1995, this animated feature is still in the development stage, so all information is scarce. I do know, however, that some Hanna-Barbera heads have rolled after discovering that Nexus, the Dark Horse character, is an assassin of sorts. A fair amount of executives are not comfortable with such themes, and might want to change some major concepts of the character, something which Nexus creators Mike Baron and Steve Rude may not like.

Zen, The Intergalactic Ninja—The Movie seems to be the next big movie sensation in the spirit of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*. Sceneries Entertainment will produce the film, which is set to start shooting this December. Philippe Diaz, who is producing *The Royal Way* starring Richard Harris, will produce the

***Nexus: The Movie* is projected to be released in 1995 as an animated feature.**

film along with Mark Freedman as Executive Producer. Director Brian Yunza (*Return of the Living Dead III* and *Bride of Re-animator*) will direct the feature. Yunza is also the original creator of the Touchstone success, *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*. The screenplay will be written by Yunza and Chris Solimine.

With this being our special horror issue of *Wizard*, what could be better than a film about...vampires. Especially when the film features cameos by the likes of rock star/poet Henry Rollins, and comic heavyweights Stan Lee and Frank Miller.

The film in question, *Jugular Wine: A Vampire Odyssey*, offers all of the above and more. Made with virtually no budget (and featured in *The Hollywood Reporter* because of that fact), these special guests, along with most of the cast, crew, and support staff, *volunteered* to do this film.

"I don't like horror movies," notes filmmaker Blair Murphy, "but I love vampires. I wanted to make a very vampiric picture that felt creepy, cool, mythic, personal, and fun."

To see if he succeeded, as well as checking out whether comic book creators can actually act, you can get a copy of *Jugular Wine* via mail by sending $19.95 (plus $3 for postage) to Pagan Films, 1801 Lincoln Blvd. #266, Venice, CA 90291.

The film has earned Murphy a regular job with Lee's Marvel Films, and some work for ☥, formerly known as Prince. He is also currently working on his second feature.

The ghost will walk again. *The Phantom*, Lee Falk's classic character who is involved in a bit of a revival thanks to the syndicated cartoon series *Phantom 2040* (which began airing in September), will start filming as a live-action movie in October. Jeffrey Boam has written the script, and Joe Dante (*Gremlins*) will direct. Set to star as the "Man Who Never Dies" is Billy Zane (*Dead Calm* and *Tombstone*). Paramount will distribute.

NEXUS ™ & © 1994 MIKE BARON AND STEVE RUDE.

SPOILER WARNING

I'm about to give away important plot information regarding the *Star Trek: Generations* film, coming in November. If you don't want to know the plot, then stop reading! Instead, go on to the next section.

As the story opens, retired Captain Kirk (William Shatner), Chekov (Walter Koenig), and Scotty (James Doohan) are invited to attend the christening of the Enterprise B (Excelsior class). This is an official ceremony for the press, and Kirk is invited for the sake of good publicity. As the three of them embark on a token trip around our solar system, they receive a distress call from a transport ship. Captain John Harriman, the first man in charge of the Enterprise outside of Kirk for thirty years, tries to get another Federation ship to help, but there aren't any around. The Enterprise doesn't have a full crew yet, nor does it have a medical staff, tractor beams, or photon torpedoes. Harriman decides he has little choice, and intercepts the ship.

The ship is engulfed in an energy ribbon that's tearing it apart. With little time to spare, Harriman asks for Kirk's advice, which of course he's glad to give. Kirk takes command and gets the Enterprise close enough to the ship to beam a few passengers out before the transport ship explodes. Among the few are Soran (Malcolm McDowell), a member of a race of beings that is around 300 years old, and Guinan (Whoopi Goldberg), the ageless bar keeper from *The Next Generation*.

When the ribbon grabs the Enterprise and begins to pull it asunder, Kirk rigs the main deflector dish to shoot anti-matter into the ribbon in order to free the people on the ship. It works, and the Enterprise escapes, but not without its casualties—the part of the ship that Kirk was in is sucked into space.

We cut to 75 years later, where Capt. Picard (Patrick Stewart) gets word that his only brother and brother's child were killed in a fire. Becoming a bit despondent, he puts Riker (Jonathan Frakes) in charge of an away mission where an observatory is being attacked by Romulans. On that observatory is Soran, who was last seen on Enterprise B.

In the meantime, Data (Brent Spiner) gives in to his curiosity and has Geordi LaForge (LeVar Burton) install his emotion microchip in him. Data is deluged with emotions, so much in fact, that when he and Geordi are at the observatory's wreckage, and Soran kidnaps Geordi, Data is too scared to help.

Soran takes Geordi to a Klingon ship commanded by Lursa and B'etor, the two Klingon sisters who tried to take over the Klingon high council. They've made an uneasy alliance with Soran, who's building them a superweapon which will conquer the Klingon empire. Soran, on the other hand, wants to get into the Nexus (the energy ribbon which occurs only once every 75 years or so), a place where all of your dreams come true, and you never age. The best way for him to do this, of course, is to blow up stars and cause the energy ripples to send the Nexus toward him.

After a pointless torture scene, the kidnappers swap Geordi for Picard, and Geordi is sent back to the Enterprise. Unbeknownst to him, those pesky Klingon sisters have put a mini-camera in his visor and can now see everything he does. While he's in engineering, they see the charts he's looking at, and figure out what frequency the Enterprise's shields are at. Using that information, they set their torpedoes to the same frequency, and fly them right through the Enterprise's shields.

The torpedoes cause major damage, but not before the Enterprise fires upon the Klingon ship. A warp core breach occurs, and everyone is rushed to the saucer section of the ship. Just as the ship separates, the battle section explodes and sends the saucer rushing down to the planet where Picard and Soran are.

Picard doesn't get to Soran in time, and the whole solar system goes up in a bang. Picard finds himself in the Nexus, and hooks up with Kirk, who has been there for the last 70 to 80 years. Since time has no meaning, and they can will themselves anywhere, Kirk and Picard go back in time to the observatory on the planet and stop Soran from destroying the solar system, but not before Soran shoots Kirk in the back. Kirk dies in Picard's arms.

Picard and Riker are finally able to get their roughed-up crew aboard Starfleet shuttlecrafts to take them back to Earth. Data sheds a tear upon finding his lost cat, Spot. The ending is fairly anticlimactic, and there was really no reason for Scotty and Chekov to even be in the picture, as all they had were glorified cameos.

END OF SPOILER

TELEVISION

Spider-Man will make its TV debut with one episode in November, and will then officially be added to the Fox schedule in February '95. Some of the stories you can expect are: "Night of the Lizard," "The Sting of the Scorpion," "The Spider-Slayer—Part 1," "The Return of the Spider-Slayer—Part 2" (both episodes feature the Kingpin), "The Menace of Mysterio," "Doctor Octopus: Armed and Dangerous," "The Alien Costume—Parts 1-3" (the origin of the black Spidey costume, and Venom, which—in the cartoon version—is a substance from a meteorite that hitches a ride to Earth on a spaceship), "Kraven the Hunter," "The Hobgoblin—Parts 1-2," "The Chameleon" (featuring Nick Fury), "The Vulture," and "Hydro-Man."

The casting of *Star Trek: Voyager* proves that Paramount puts out one of the most politically correct shows around. Originally slated to star as the Voyager's skipper, Elizabeth Janeway, actress Genevieve Bujold (*Coma, Dead Ringers*) pulled out due to the stress induced from working on a weekly TV show. Reports have it that she also didn't like the costumes, had trouble remembering her lines, and acted like a true prima donna. Kate Mulgrew, who starred as the lead in the 1970s show *Mrs. Columbo* (which currently airs on A&E), is her replacement. Robert Patrick McNeil will portray Lt. Tom Paris, Robert Beltran is the Indian Chakotay, Robert Picardo is the hologram of Dr. Zimmerman, Garrett Lang is the Ops/Communications Officer Harry Kim, and Tim Russ plays Tuvok, the Vulcan. Winrich Colbe has been chosen to direct the first episode, which should air in January '95, mainly because of the great job he did directing the *Next Generation* series finale.

ABC's *Lois & Clark* has seen a cast change in the role of Jimmy Olsen. Since the beginning of its second season in September, Justin Whalin (*Serial Mom*) has been playing the Planet photographer; he replaced Michael Landes, who the producers believed to be too old for the role. Also, Bronson Pinchot (*Perfect Strangers, Beverly Hills Cop, True Romance*) has been tapped to play the Prankster, who will work his mischief on Metropolis in November.

Two new comic book TV shows are flying over the airwaves. One currently airing in several cities is entitled *Inside Comix* (formerly *The Comic Book Show*). It features Tony DiGeralmo and Nikki Lauria as the hosts. The second series is the more flamboyant *Flights of Fantasy*. Originally a cable access show stationed in Washington, D.C., this show has been taken national by producer/host George Wood, and has been picked up by three satellite networks, including Channel America. This means that every TV station in the country will have the ability to pick this show up.

Flights will move into a state-of-the-art production studio in November, and will then be seen nationally starting in January. The series, a cross between *Sneak Previews* and *Entertainment Tonight*, focuses on comics, trading cards, Japanimation, and video games. Dark Horse and Valiant have both agreed to sponsor the show.

From the episodes I've seen, the show, which is still produced at the cable access station, has real potential. As soon as some money is pumped into the project, it could become a real asset to the industry. Keep your eye on this one. It could become *the* show to watch. ☆

Dave Galvan is a Portland, Ore.-based freelance writer who specializes in the entertainment industry.

SKELETON WARRIORS

Airing Saturday mornings on CBS at 9:30 a.m. just before *WildC.A.T.s* is *Skeleton Warriors*, a new series from the highly inventive mind of Gary Goddard, who is no Hollywood rookie. A writer, producer, and director, Goddard directed the *Masters of the Universe* film and created *Captain Power and the Soldiers of the Future*—the first show to use CGI animation along with live action. He just finished writing the music and lyrics for *EFX*, a new show starring Michael Crawford (the *Phantom of the Opera* musical) that opens in Las Vegas this December.

Goddard co-founded Landmark Entertainment with his partner Tony Christopher years ago. *Skeleton Warriors* is their first TV project in three years.

After getting back from Japan, Goddard was fishing around for ideas that could be used for movies and TV shows. While playing with his godson, he hit upon the idea for skeletons. Remembering the movie *Jason and the Argonauts*, in which Jason fought against an army of skeletons, Goddard was inspired to create characters which were nothing but bones. He worked up concepts for all the characters, and then comic legend Neal Adams drew the very first sketches. "I then took it over to the sculptors, and they worked up the first 3-D figures," says Goddard. Before even finishing all of the characters, Goddard was excited about the project, and he took what he had over to Playmates. In just 20 minutes, he sold the company on a toy deal.

After selling the *Skeleton* concept, Goddard then had to flesh out (pun intended) the heroes. He read an article on family values in a Hollywood trade magazine, and realized that the opposite of absolute evil is the love of a family. "That led to the story of a family with Justin, Talyn, and the youngest brother Grimskull, and the fact that Grimskull is jealous because his older brother is next in line to be king. Justin is led astray by Barron Dark, who is not yet a skeleton. He tricks Justin and convinces him that, for the good of the kingdom, he should lower the defense grid off the Lightstar Crystal and let him and his people come in and help run the kingdom."

In a weak personal moment, Justin does that, and a battle ensues for the Lightstar Crystal, resulting in the shattering of the crystal. As it shatters, the energy bathes everyone in the room, creating an outer manifestation of the interior of the person. Barron Dark, who is heartless and cold, becomes a living skeleton. As the beam hits Justin, it gives him the power of the Lightstar itself, since he is such a good person. Talyn is given the power of flight since she is close to her pet bird, and Grimskull, who is jealous of his brother, ends up half-skeleton and half-human. While the characters fight to regain the kingdom from Barron Dark, they are also fighting to get the remnants of the Crystal put back into place so they can restore Grimstone.

Over 40 licensees have signed up to produce *Skeleton Warriors* merchandise. Along with Playmates (who will also produce the video game for Sega and Nintendo), Marvel has signed up to do a comic book, Fleer will be doing a set of cards, Hallmark will make greeting cards, several clothing companies will produce shirts and hats, and Random House will produce books.

Skeleton Warriors looks like a fun show with some great concepts. Keep an eye out for it this season.

"Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to battle we go." (Whistle here.) Ah yes, brace yourself for the newest addition to Saturday morning cartoons: *Skeleton Warriors*.

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Congratulations to the winner of *Wizard* #37's Find the Blankman Contest!

Answers: Blankman logos appeared on pages 6, 22, 64, 108, 138, and 224 of issue #37.

Grand Prize

Matthew Blake (age 12)
Chula Vista, CA

Congratulations to the winners of *Wizard* #37's Blankman Art Contest!

Grand Prize

Bryan Trygve Lenning
Olympia, WA. (Look for his strip in this issue's Wizard News!)

Second Prize

Charles Hermosilla
Agana, Guam
Joseph Briggs
Brooklyn, NY

Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Blankman Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064 for a complete list of the winners of both contests.

SO, YOU'RE WONDERIN' HOW A PARDNER LIKE YOURSELF CAN WIN THIS HERE CONTEST, RIGHT? WELL, IT COULDN'T BE SIMPLER. JUST FILL OUT THAT THERE OFFICIAL "TWO-STEP IN TEXAS" COUPON BELOW, ATTACH A PHOTOCOPY OF A DOCUMENT PROVING THAT EITHER YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU'LL BE TRAVELING WITH, IS THE PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF YOUR FAMILY, AND 18 OR OLDER, STICK IT ALL IN AN ENVELOPE, BRANDISH A STAMP ON IT, AND MAIL THE WHOLE KABOODLE OFF TO:

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No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press and Thunderhead Entertainment, their immediate families, and anyone who didn't know that if it ain't big, it ain't from Texas! Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, age, and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, or three-by-five-inch index card, and staple a photocopy of a birth certificate, driver's license, or other document proving either your age or the age of the legal guardian you're traveling with to the form. To be eligible to win the Grand Prize, the contestant or the contestant's parent or legal guardian must be 18 years old or older, and must provide proof of age. If the contestant himself or herself is the parent or legal guardian of the family, he or she must provide proof of age. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Two-Step in Texas Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. You've gotta ask yourself, "Did he fire five shots or six?" To tell you the truth, in all this excitement, I've even forgotten myself. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 22, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on November 23, 1994, by Wizard Press.

For the name of the winner, available after December 14, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Two-Step in Texas Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

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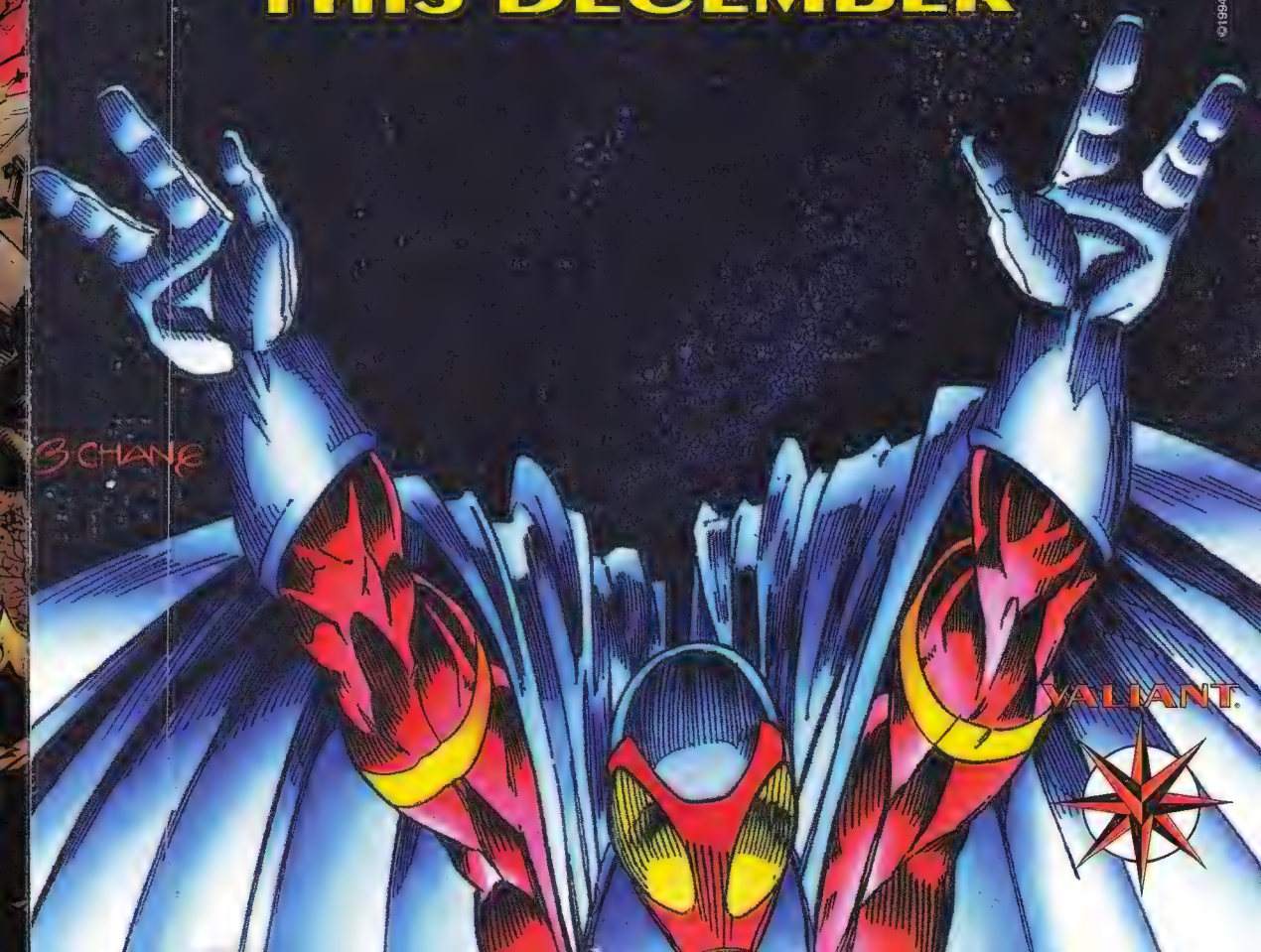

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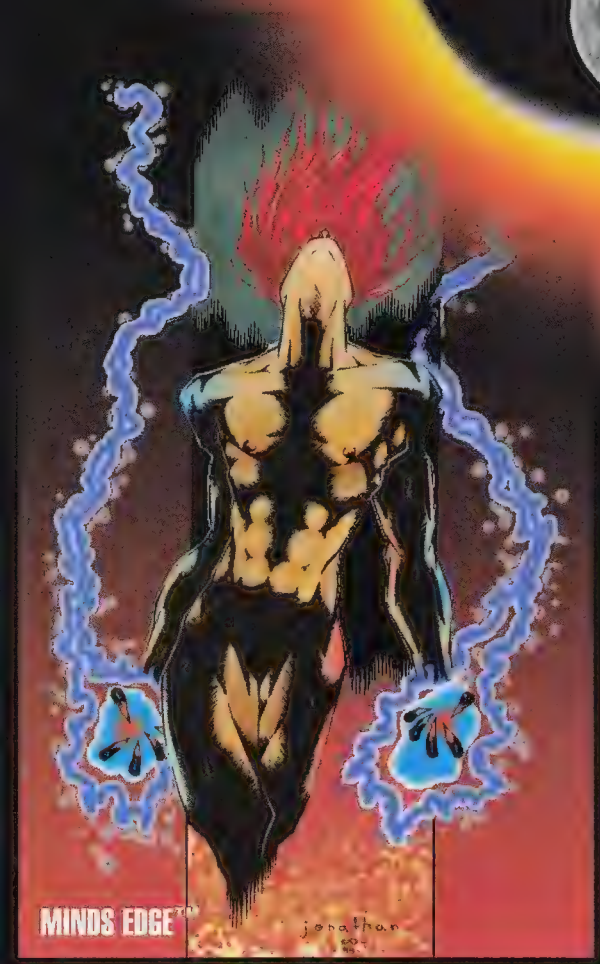

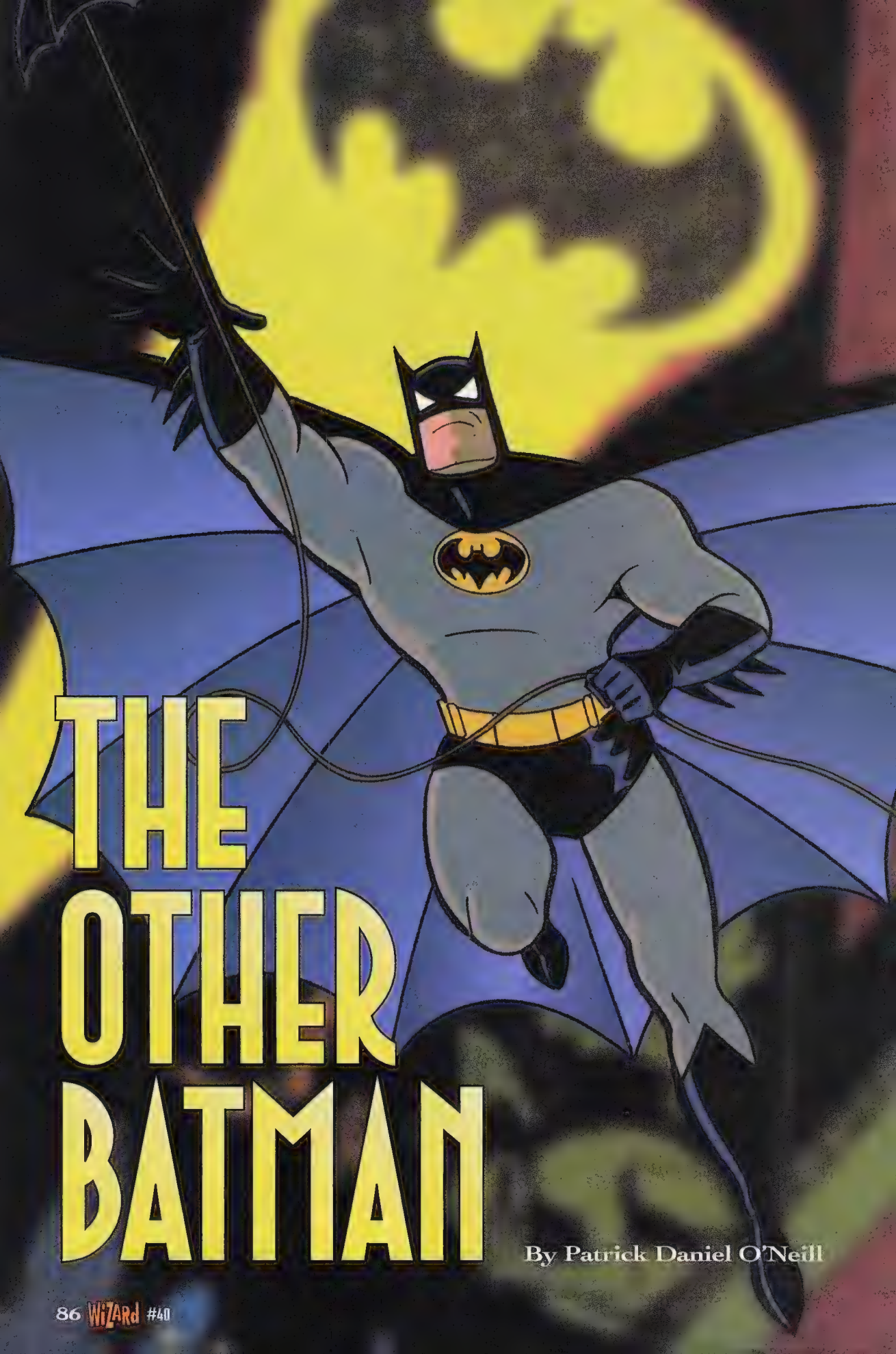

THE OTHER BATMAN

By Patrick Daniel O'Neill

THE CREATORS BEHIND THE *ADVENTURES* VERSION OF THE CAPED CRUSADER DISCUSS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS BATMAN AND THE "REAL" ONE, WHAT MAKES HIM TICK, AND THE FEAR OF BEING STEREOTYPED.

"In *Batman Adventures*, you often wind up sympathizing with the villains, because they're really the protagonists of the story—which allows me to put a bit of a subversive air to it," says writer Kelley Puckett of the popular DC Comics series. "I'm usually rooting for the Joker to win, as I'm writing it. Batman, in *Batman Adventures*, is more of a force than a character. He's the catalyst, the one who sets the wheels of justice in motion."

Puckett, who has been writing the title based on the popular Fox-TV program, *Batman: The Animated Series*, since the first issue (with few exceptions), points to that "personification of justice" aspect as one of the differences between the Batman he writes and the character as seen in the mainline titles—*Batman, Detective Comics, Shadow of the Bat*, and *Legends of the Dark Knight*.

Although *Batman Adventures* owes its life to the TV series, Puckett says the connection to the broadcast version pretty much ends there. There's no attempt by the *Batman Adventures* creators to hew to the continuity of the TV series. "The show doesn't set up a whole lot of continuity itself, except for character origins," the former DC assistant editor points out.

However, he admits there are certain TV-originated characters he prefers not to use in the comic. "They have some characters that I shy away from using, such as Harley Quinn," he notes. "I don't like to write Harley because I think [TV writer and producer] Paul Dini does such an incredible job." Puckett does, however, note his admiration of the character. "The issue I'm writing right now, which was originally gonna be mostly a Joker story with no Harley at all, evolved into a Harley Quinn story. I've grown more sure of myself in terms of her depiction. She's really a fun character, and she's nice to have around when the Joker's there—as a good foil for him."

As he keeps aspects of the comic different from those of the animated series, Puckett also keeps a certain amount of distance between the two Batmen. "This is an extremely different Batman from the one in the mainline continuity," Puckett says. "*Batman Adventures* is powered by a different engine from the one that makes the regular books go. Batman is presented there as an actual person: He has failings and shortcomings and self-doubts. It's a different kind of heroism—he has failings, so he's like us; but he also has this sense of justice and determination that allows you to sympathize with him.

"In *Batman Adventures*, Batman is not human," Puckett continues. "Well, he *is*—if he got shot in the head, he'd die; but our Batman is more capable than any human being ever really could be. He's more dedicated than any human could be. You don't sympathize with the Batman in *Batman Adventures*, you admire him. He's more of a classical hero."

Puckett's editor, Scott Peterson, agrees, calling the protagonist of *Batman Adventures* "a little more pure. His anguish is a little closer to the surface, but he's also a bit better at putting it away for the time being. To be honest, I think one of the differences is also simply the elimination of any subplots. In the course of each issue, our Batman is totally committed to solving the immediate problem. The most we'll have is one or two panels of him looking at a picture of his parents over the fireplace. But the regular books have to spend pages going over the continuity elements."

And those differences go deep into the style of the book, Puckett adds. This affects not only the characters, but the very feel of the world they live in. "The *Batman Adventures* world's morality is more stark. The issues of good and evil are more powerful as you move away from reality, more personified. You're getting closer to myth than to fable. We don't put morals into *Batman Adventures*,

SQUARE-JAWED, ANGST-FREE, AND AS TOUGH AS THE ORIGINAL... HE'S THE "ANIMATED" BATMAN.

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CLIPPED WINGS

BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES HAS BEEN CANCELED, AND THE SHOW'S CREATIVE JOCKEYS HAVE MIXED EMOTIONS ABOUT CLOSING UP SHOP.

"I felt it was a shame to stop when, with the last season, we finally got all the storytelling and animated elements working so nicely," says Executive Producer and head writer Paul Dini. "I'm sorry to see the show end, but I'd rather have it end now then have it just limp along, and we [milk] it for what we can get out of it."

"My feeling? Bad," responds Executive Producer and head artist Bruce Timm. "It was a great show to work on and it was a big part of my life. Now that it's kind of over, it's so sad."

The show is only "kind of over" in the sense that Dini and Timm are putting the finishing touches on the last 15 episodes of the 85 total episodes of the series—10 of which will air in the fall as part of the Saturday morning The Adventures of Batman and Robin *package, with the remaining five episodes airing sometime in early '95 when* Batman: The Animated Series *returns as a syndicated package.*

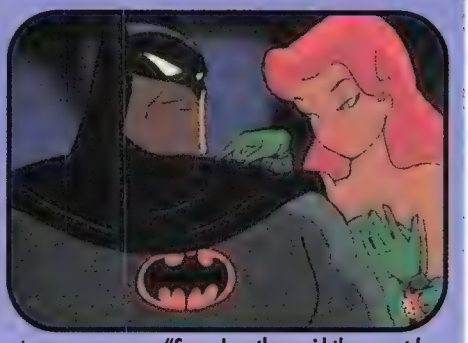
"The show being canceled was not so much a surprise as it was the reality of syndicated television," explains Dini. "You do a set number of episodes, and after that point, it really doesn't become profitable to do any more. If Batman *had been on prime-time and had been getting good enough numbers, I'm sure we could have kept it going a couple of more years."*

Looking back on what he considers the high and low points of the series, Timm applauds the series's first season as featuring "shows that still hold up pretty well," and says that ultimately "some shows were great, a lot of them were not—but our batting average is pretty good.

"I don't think we did justice to certain characters," he laments. "I don't think we ever did a really good Penguin story, and a lot of that was because we were restricted to following the movie look of the character. A lot of people liked Robin, and I think he's OK but, in retrospect, I kind of wish we had a chance to do Robin again. We tried to make Robin cool, and he's essentially uncool. I wish we would have done Robin as a bratty, young Spider-Man."

Dini claims that by the end of the first season, the critical response and the prospect of a Batman animated movie "had us on a real high." But the roller coaster ride hit bottom once the series was moved to Saturday morning and the Fox Network donned the mask of Boogeyman. "We immediately got pressure from the network to put Robin in every episode, so we ended up working much harder to come up with a traditional, good Batman episode that Robin had to have a major part in. We were also told that we could not write anything like 'Harley and Ivy' or 'Heart of Ice' [two of the series' most acclaimed episodes], where the villain takes center stage. Then they didn't want the shows to be too dark. The network basically had the attitude that Batman *was a kid's show. I felt they wanted us to 'dumb down' the show into an animated retread of [the] Adam West and Burt Ward [TV series]," sighs the writer.*

Batman Adventures *writer Kelley Puckett says he didn't have this type of problem, but understands the producers' rationale. "It's actually a very different situation between the book and the cartoon; for the animated series, it had to do with 'softening' the story somewhat. I think the idea was that kids identify more easily with Robin than they do with Batman, just because the ages are closer. They wanted to make it more kid-oriented. But as for the book, we're not really under any pressure. The only pressure to include Robin is from Scott Peterson, only because the readers tend to really like the character. They really had no choice."*



"Sorry Ivy, they said they want less dark, villain-oriented stories, and more Robin."

Timm and Dini are making up for the demise of Batman: The Animated Series *with a surge of comic book work for DC that has come in the wake of their successful one-shot,* Mad Love, *which spotlighted villainess Harley Quinn. The pair recently wrapped up writing and illustrating parts of* Batman Adventures Annual #1, *which shipped in September, and are, according to Dini, "fighting the deadline" on the* Batman Adventures Christmas Special, *written by Dini and illustrated by Timm and other alumni of the animated series.*

"Hopefully, Paul and I will get going on a Harley Quinn and Poison Ivy mini-series sometime next year," reports Timm, whose "deep, dark secret" is that he illustrated, "quite badly," a series of He-Man *comics for Mattel in his early days. "Comics are good in that we can experiment and do a lot of things that we could not do in the [TV] series."*

The pair is also involved in Freakazoid, *a co-production with Steven Spielberg, which is an animated adventure of a boy who becomes a superhero, an event that, hints Dini, "is the best and worst thing that ever happened to him."*

Ultimately, however, Batman: The Animated Series *is very much on Timm and Dini's mind. To Timm's way of thinking, its success has been little short of a miracle.*

"I had hoped it would be something special," he concludes. "I've been in this business for so long and have worked on so many lousy shows; I kept thinking that there's got to be a way to do this that's not crappy, and was not merely aping the Japanese. We figured we had enough experience in this business to know what not to do. With Batman, *we were really able to turn it around."*

—Marc Shapiro

but it's a very moralistic world."

Penciler Mike Parobeck doesn't see the whole thing quite so philosophically: "One's a cartoon and the other's...No, not really," he jokes.

Upcoming changes to the mainstream Batman's costume shouldn't affect *Batman Adventures*, notes Puckett. "I would think that [DC] probably wouldn't make us do that, for a number of obvious reasons—just given the way the book works, the nature of the book. I can't imagine any benefit they would get from an all-pervasive continuity element."

Batman Adventures has received critical acclaim from both fans and professionals. Older fans, who remember the style of the Silver Age, seem to appreciate the storytelling emphasis in the book. "It makes me very happy when fans point to *Batman Adventures* and say, 'This is a good comic book,'" Puckett says. "A lot of the work we put into the comic is below the surface. There's no long purple prose or interior monologues. Mike generates really impressive graphic shots almost against his will. Most of what we do is technical stuff; we try to bring more technical expertise to the storytelling. Getting a good response from professionals and knowledgeable fans means a lot to me, because it means the work we're doing is showing."

Peterson is equally effusive in his praise of the art team of Parobeck and inker Rick Burchett. "Mike is such a phenomenal, yet underrated, talent. His storytelling is so strong, so unbelievably dramatic, yet so clear. His anatomy is absolutely perfect. He's amazing," Peterson says. "He's been inked by dozens of different inkers, but nobody inks him like Rick Burchett. Rick takes him to some higher level; the synergy between them is phenomenal. They are both so good independently—it's like Lennon and McCartney: Individually they're geniuses, together they're history-making."

Burchett says that he and Parobeck, after two years, have become almost like a single hand producing the art. "I think part of it is—and it's kind of undefinable—we both are moving in the same direction as far as 'look' is concerned. We know each other's strengths and weaknesses and we can play to that," he explains. "When Mike and I first started working together, his pencils were a lot tighter; over the course of the past two years, he has learned what my strengths are, and he can play to that and loosen up."

Beyond maintaining the look of the TV series in the comic book, Parobeck says the story is paramount when he pencils *Batman Adventures*. "I go through each script from page to page and work up the best angles, story-wise. It has to be story first; after that comes any artistic consideration. I do thumbnails, and then copy them to the boards using an artograph. From that I work on completing

ROBIN AND ALFRED HANGING AROUND IN THE BATCAVE.

the pencils. I try to work through the book in order, from page one to the end. I like to keep some continuity going."

The lack of heavy detail and complicated backgrounds form a simplicity that is deceptive, says Burchett. "What appears to be so easy is what's really so hard about it...and most of the burden falls on Mike's shoulders. There's nowhere to hide in this artwork; if it's not drawn well, it shows up immediately, because we don't have a lot of detail, crosshatching, or line work that sometimes hides poor draftsmanship in some artists' work. That's all stripped away; if something's out of proportion, it shows up immediately.

"And, on my end, I don't have the detail to create interest, so I have to play with the line weights and make them work to give the characters energy and depth and a feeling of weight. That gets a little tricky sometimes."

Still, in the current marketplace, working in this deceptively simple style can be a handicap to one's career. After all, "cartoony" is not often used as a compliment by today's fans. "I worry about being stereotyped," Parobeck admits. "I'd like to break out of it sooner or later and get back into 'regular' comics. I have nothing going right now that's headed that way."

Burchett feels some of the same pressures. "I worry about being 'typecast' sometimes. Anytime you work on a high-profile book in a very definite style, people will see you in a certain way. Frankly, that's one of the reasons I took on the [ongoing] *Green Arrow* cover assignment [starting with #0], so I could have artwork out there every month in a different style. I think it will be much more of a burden to Mike than it is to me."

Editor Peterson's enthusiasm doesn't stop at the pencils and inks. He thinks the whole creative team is responsible for the success of *Batman Adventures*. "This is the only book I've worked on where every member is such a part of the team," he notes. "Everyone is absolutely irreplaceable; usually the writer and penciler work well together, or the penciler has an inker he only wants to work with, but here it's down to this book being irrevocably changed if Rick Taylor stopped coloring it. Even when we switched letterers from Tim Harkins to Richard Starkings, the book took on a whole different tone."

But Puckett jumps in to say that, to some extent, all those aspects of the book were mostly a happy accident. "So many aspects of this project that make it a critical success came about by happenstance. The [use of] single-issue stories [was] decided on early—when it was still just a mini-series—because we thought that would be easier. We didn't look ahead to see that it would make it unique in the marketplace," he remembers.

There have, however, been some extra-length stories published, or created for future publication. Earlier this year, *Mad Love*—by Paul Dini and Bruce Timm, producers on the Batman animation team—became the first *Batman Adventures* special ever published, and soon turned into an award winner. "Even before *Mad Love* won a Harvey award and an Eisner award, we were leaning toward getting Paul Dini and Bruce Timm to do another special for us. They're working on a three-part mini-series with Harley and Poison Ivy. I've read the outline and it's a complete hoot," he reports. "As for stand-alones, we have a holiday special coming out written by Paul, with art in segments by Bruce Timm, [director] Kevin Altieri, and [director] Dan

THE JOKER TAKES THE TIME TO EXPLAIN BASIC VILLAIN THEORY TO HIS ROOKIE ACCOMPLICE, HARLEY QUINN.

Reeba. That'll be out in early December, and the Harley and Ivy series, early next year."

For its 25th issue, *Batman Adventures* featured its first guest star: Mike Parobeck's version of the Man of Steel. "We think about guest-starring other heroes at times. Superman came up because it was the 25th issue and we wanted to do something special. We wouldn't do it just to do it; but if we got an idea for a good story, we'd ask. Ever since the *Superman & Batman Magazine* [published by Welsh Publishing] started, and we saw what it would look like, we were happy with the possibility."

Peterson says there's one character from the mainline DC universe who may get the Puckett/Parobeck/Burchett treatment sooner than any other. "There's a certain character—Kelley's favorite, as well as Rick Burchett's, the Question—that they're both dying to do. We hope to use him within the next year."

Puckett adds, "I've been thinking about this a lot lately, because of [the Superman issue]. Everybody's been hearing about that, and saying, 'Oh, why don't you have this person, and that person?' There are a couple of characters that I think would work really well. I think the Creeper would actually be pretty cool. The one thing that I'm actually thinking of pursuing is a Mr. Miracle story—because I think that could work really well. So we might do that in the future."

Speaking of the future, Puckett is able to detail a few upcoming issues of the series. "I'm doing issue #28 now—it's a Joker and Harley Quinn Christmas story. It's just pure humor, basically, all the way through. What happens is, Joker is just bored at Arkham, so he develops an *anti*-antipsychotic drug, which induces schizophrenia and paranoid delusions for a 72-hour period. [The story] has Harley dosing the entire City Council with this drug, so they're all immediately committed to Arkham, and Joker stages this big, murderous '12 Days of Christmas' production number with the 12 Council members. It's completely bizarre; really silly.

"Issue #29 has Batman and Talia in Nepal; the heart of the story is going to be their relationship. He won't get more involved with her; you're not going to see the disruption of this melodramatically bittersweet status quo of her being the daughter of his enemy, [which means] he can never truly be with her, although she's the one woman he's ever loved."

Issue #30 will be an origin story of the three characters from issues #10 and #20: Mastermind, the Professor, and Mr. Nice—all based upon DC editors Mike Carlin, Denny O'Neil, and Archie Goodwin, respectively.

These particular stories should delight the sizable number of the title's readers. While the direct-market distributors' Top 100 lists may not show *Batman Adventures* as murdering the competition, Puckett says, "The newsstand figures are insanely good; based on direct-market figures alone, I should have stopped getting royalties months ago, but the checks keep coming, so the newsstand sales must be great. That makes me happy."

Beyond sales, there are several good reasons to keep a comic book going. "There's very little else that DC or anyone else is doing right now that you can market to very young children," Puckett notes, "and I think—for that reason, if no other—*Batman Adventures* will keep going until it's financially unfeasible." He adds that he's not concerned that, with the cancellation of the TV series (see sidebar), his book will be the only way fans of the "animated" Batman can find new stories. "I try not to think of it that way, because it might make me too nervous," he laughs. "Really, I'd honestly be happy if kids thought of the book as a way to get good stories. Everybody at DC, and especially at Warner Bros., has been really supportive about just letting us do what we want to do—[Warner has] never put any pressure on us at all, and nobody from editorial at DC has, either."

Peterson also sees no reason to tamper with success: "I recently sat down to think, 'How can I improve this book? What am I going to do to shake this book up and take it to the next level?' and I couldn't come up with anything. For my money, the book is just about perfect. I've got easily one of the best writers in comics, the best art team, the best character. There are some stories that are stronger than others, and some stories that—for whatever reason—don't quite click, but, in general, month in and month out, it's 22 pages of really well-drawn, really well-written comic books."

Parobeck sums it up, by noting that the larger-than-life quality of *Batman Adventures* is the proper nature of comics: "I'd say *Batman Adventures* is comics as they should be—the adventures, the bigness. That's more of what comics should be." ☆

CRACKIN' HEADS AND MAKING REALLY NEAT SOUND EFFECTS IS WHAT KEEPS THIS BATMAN GOING.

He's Becoming What He Hates Most...

A Vampire

On Sale in November

Batman®: Bloodstorm

Doug Moench Kelley Jones John Beatty

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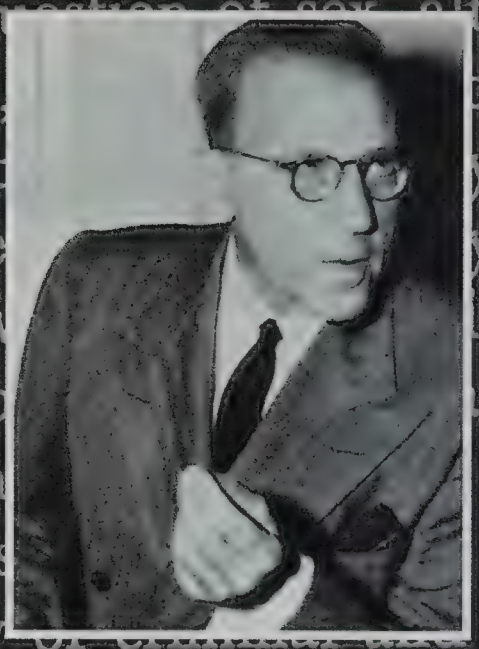
DARK LEGEND



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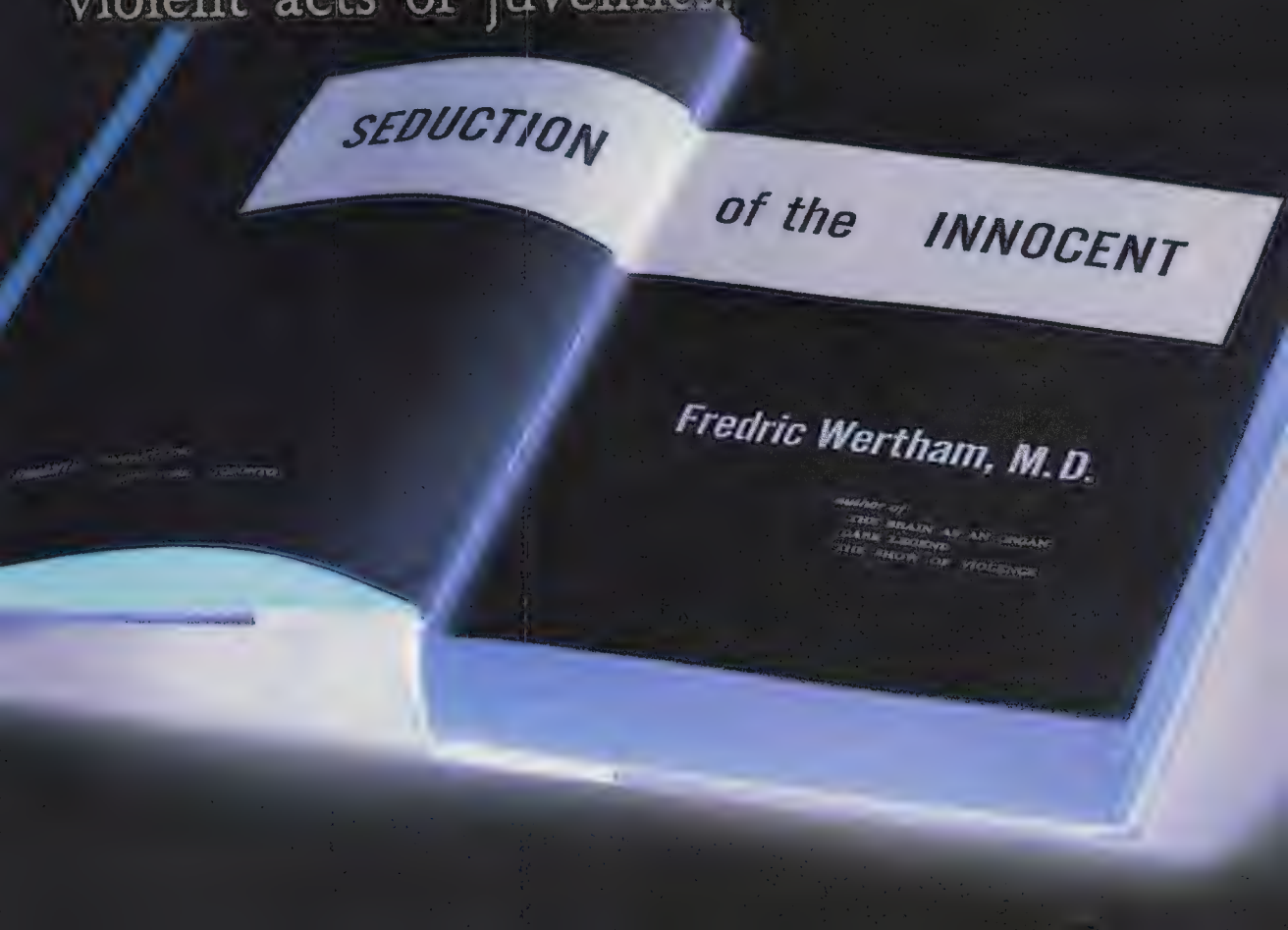


THE REALITY BEHIND THE SPECTER OF DR. FREDRIC WERTHAM AND HIS BOOK, *SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT*, AND HOW BOTH BROUGHT THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY TO ITS KNEES.

Opposite and above: The good Doctor and his book.

Forty years after the publication of the anti-comic book psychological study *Seduction of the Innocent,* the book and its author Fredric Wertham still live in infamy among comic fans. Even those not old enough to have lived through the time of its publication have heard the tale—often told in comic histories and discussions on censorship—of a man who brought the comic industry to its knees with what is invariably described as a poorly written and shoddily researched book.

But who exactly was Fredric Wertham and why did he write *Seduction*? Those questions are not usually examined when Wertham's name is mentioned. Instead, he is merely held up as our boogie man; as a way of saying, "See what can happen?" That is certainly correct—"it" can, and did, happen.

Fredric Wertham was born Fredric Wertheimer in Nuremberg, Germany on March 20, 1895. He received his MD from the University of Wurzburg in 1921. After a period of postgraduate study, he held a position at the Kraepelin Clinic in Munich, where the theories of the clinic's founder, Emile Kraepelin, had a tremendous impact on him. Kraepelin held that a patient's environment must be considered when formulating a treatment for him. This concept was quite radical at the time, and became an underlying theme of Wertham's clinical work and writing throughout his career.

That career began in earnest in 1922 when Wertham moved to the U.S. and eventually landed a position at the Phipps Psychiatric Clinic at Johns Hopkins University. While working at Johns Hopkins, he wrote his first book *The Brain as an Organ*, which was published in 1926. As the name implies, *The Brain* advanced the concept that the brain was an organ of the human body—a notion not widely held by the psychiatrists of the day. This was an encouraging beginning to Wertham's career as a writer. *The Brain* became a widely used medical text, and because of it, Wertham became the first psychiatrist ever to receive a National Research Council grant.

Wertham left Johns Hopkins in 1932 to be named senior psychiatrist at Belleview Hospital in New York, one of the most prestigious posts in the psychiatric field. Throughout this period, he continued to write numerous articles for psychiatric journals. He also gained an interest in the relationship between mental health and criminal behavior, and helped New York State set up a psychiatric evaluation process for convicted criminals. All in all, Dr. Fredric Wertham had become a distinguished and respected name in the field of psychiatry.

RISE OF THE BEAST

Shortly after Wertham gained recognition, the comic industry was born, and really took off with the introduction of Superman in 1938. Within a year, numerous other superheroes had been created, and the Golden Age of comics was well under way.

But all was not smooth sailing for the fledgling comic book business. From almost the very beginning, the industry had its critics. In a May 8, 1940 editorial, *Chicago Daily News* book reviewer Sterling North had this to say about the new form of entertainment:

"Badly drawn, badly written, and badly printed—a strain on young eyes and young nervous systems—the effect of these pulp-paper nightmares is that of a violent stimulant. Their crude blacks and reds spoil the child's natural sense of color; their hypodermic injection of sex and murder make the child impatient with better, though quieter, stories. Unless we want a coming generation even more ferocious than

BY WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN AND MARK SEIFERT

SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT © 1953, 1954 BY FREDRIC WERTHAM. PHOTOS OF BOOK BY HARRY PETERSON.

the present one, parents and teachers throughout America must band together to break the 'comic' magazine."

This kind of criticism was understandably a cause for some concern in the industry. The industry's biggest publisher at the time, DC Comics, set up an editorial advisory board, consisting of psychiatrists, child welfare experts, and other famous and well-respected citizens to insure that DC's comics were not harmful, but instead beneficial to children. Beginning in October 1941, the list of board members became a fixture on the inside front cover of all DC comics, accompanied by the message that DC's "deep respect for our obligation to the young people of America and their parents, and our responsibility as parents ourselves, combine to set our standards of wholesome entertainment."

Such industry efforts were initially effective in curbing criticism of comic books, as evidenced by a December 27, 1943 *Newsweek* article which concluded, "...they have bolstered their editorial boards with advisory groups, consisting of clergymen and educators whose job is to keep comic books on as high a standard as possible. The general trend of the industry is to educate as well as entertain..."

In the meantime, Wertham had continued to concentrate on the mental health aspect of criminal behavior. His second book, *Dark Legend* (1941), was the true story of a 17-year-old boy who killed his mother. Again, Wertham enjoyed considerable success for his literary efforts. *Dark Legend* was so moving and dramatic that it was made into a play. According to Edgar Peters Bowron's introduction in the 1990 book *The Fredric Wertham Collection*—a pictorial presentation of Wertham's extensive personal collection of art that his wife donated to Harvard upon his death—Wertham even tried making *Dark Legend* into a film, but never closed a deal, because of his insistence that the details of the case not be changed.

Wertham's third book, *Show of Violence*, was published in 1949. *Show*, a logical progression from *Dark Legend*, described several cases rather than one, and mainly illustrated Wertham's experiences with psychiatry in criminal cases.

In forming his thesis for *Seduction of the Innocent*—that comics were a major cause of juvenile delinquency—Wertham seemed to have forgotten a conclusion he reached in *Show*: "Only very rarely are fantasy and action linked in a deadly chain. As Clarence Darrow said, most men haven't killed anybody, but they have read obituaries with pleasure."

THE PATH TO SEDUCTION

It was shortly after Wertham opened his Lafargue Clinic for the underprivileged people of Harlem in 1946, that he first became interested in the effects of comic books on children. His public campaign against the comic book industry began in 1948 with the March 27, 1948 *Collier's* magazine article "Horror in the Nursery," for which he was interviewed.

"Horror" marked the beginning of Wertham's seven-year study into the effects of comic books on children, the results of which formed the basis of *Seduction of the Innocent*. Within the article, Wertham argued, "The number of 'good' comics is not worth discussing, but the great number that masquerade as 'good' certainly deserve close scrutiny."

In the weeks following the *Collier's* article, Wertham himself was at the forefront of the anti-comics movement. The same month, Wertham attended a symposium in New York City called "The Psychopathology of Comic Books." In May, 1948 he presented his views in an article for the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

The effects of Wertham's campaign were immediate. The April 26, 1948 issue of *Time* told how Detroit Police Commissioner Harry S. Toy examined all the comics available in his community, and then declared that they were "loaded with Communist teachings, sex, and racial discrimination." The December 20, 1948 *Time* reported a public comic book burning following a house-to-house collection in Binghamton, N.Y.

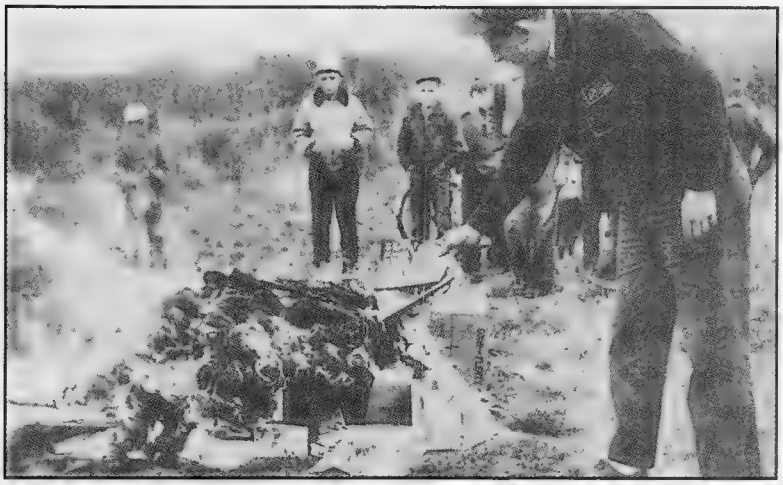
Henry E. Shultz summed up the situation in the December, 1949 issue of the *Journal of Educational Sociology*: "In towns, villages, and municipalities throughout the country...lawmakers were goaded and prodded into action, and many did their best to please and appease the angry torrent which had been loosed. Laws and ordinances, committees on legislation, censors, indeed every device to bedevil and confuse dealer, wholesaler, and publisher of comics, were created and enacted—books were banned, and finally to cap the climax, mass burnings of comic books were publicly held in several communities."

In response to some of this criticism, in mid-1948 several comic publishers, including EC (the leading publisher of horror comics) and Lev Gleason (the leading publisher of crime comics), formed the Association of Comics Magazine Publishers. The primary function of the ACMP was to administer a set of guidelines under which the comics of its member publishers had to be approved.

Unfortunately, the ACMP organization was less than perfect. It failed to secure the membership of several key publishers—notably Dell and DC—who had their own internal guidelines. Several publishers, including EC, left shortly after the ACMP was instituted over disagreements with the specifics of the code. Due to such defections, the ACMP could not afford to maintain its own screening process, and the publishers were relied on to screen their own books for code approval. Because of obvious deficiencies such as these, the ACMP did little to deflect, or prevent, criticism of the industry.

In 1949, the Canadian government enacted broad laws which dealt with crime comics "...not by imposing a direct censorship or blanket prohibition, but rather by providing in general terms that the publication and distribution as defined in the act shall be illegal..." One of the most vocal anti-comic groups, the Cincinnati Parents Committee, began rating virtually all comics published, based on their *own* criteria of printing, art, writing quality, and objectionable content. These ratings were published annually in *Parents' Magazine* beginning in 1950.

Other viewpoints on the state of the comic book industry abounded from a variety of self-proclaimed experts. Some were more extreme than Wertham, such as Gershon Legman in his 1949 book *Love and Death*, in which he wrote of "the standard psychiatric justification for comic books" used by the comic industry, and explained in all serious-



Public reaction to Wertham's anti-comic campaign was swift and extreme, as evidenced by this book burning.

PHOTO COURTESY COMIC BOOK CONFIDENTIAL ©1988 SPHINX PRODUCTIONS, ©1993 THE VOYAGER COMPANY.

SUPERMAN ™ & © DC COMICS.

Superman not only defies the laws of gravity, which his great strength makes conceivable; in addition he gives children a completely wrong idea of other basic physical laws. Not even Superman, for example, should be able to lift up a building while not standing on the ground, or to stop an airplane in mid-air while flying himself.

In California a very handsome six-year-old boy on his way home from school one day trudged to the top of a steep cliff. An ardent comic-book reader, he had translated his reading into practice and made for himself a flying cape or magic cloak. Taking a brisk run he jumped off the cliff to fly as his comic-book heroes did. Seriously injured, he told his mother, "Mama, I almost did fly!" A few days later he died from the injuries he had received.

Wertham didn't limit his criticisms to crime comics; seemingly "innocent" titles, featuring characters such as Superman and Batman, were also targeted. Superman comics deceived children with dangerously false scientific information (above excerpts from Seduction and comic page). Wertham believed Batman stories subconsciously established and reinforced homosexual tendencies in children (excerpted below). These links were often far-fetched at best, but made chilling and convincing testimony to a confused society looking for any answers to its problems.

Robin is a handsome ephebic boy, usually shown in his uniform with bare legs. He is buoyant with energy and devoted to nothing on earth or in interplanetary space as much as to Bruce Wayne. He often stands with his legs spread, the genital region discreetly evident.

ness the sinister theory on which he felt the industry was founded:

"The theory on which we supply corpses to children...[is] we train children as we train other animals, by breaking their spirit...If we accept the premise that the civilized life is better than the natural and worth distorting children to fit, there is no arguing with the...methods that do the job. The method is blood, feed children blood."

On the other end of the spectrum, there were those who disagreed with Wertham, such as Frederic M. Thrasher, Professor of Education at New York University, who wrote in the December 1949 edition of the *Journal of Educational Sociology* that:

"Fredric Wertham...claims in effect that the comics are an important factor in causing...juvenile delinquency. This extreme position, which is not substantiated by any valid...research, is not only contrary to considerable current psychiatric thinking, but also...disregards tested research procedures..."

Despite such dissenting views of Wertham's work, the comic book industry finally came under the scrutiny of the federal government in 1950, when a U.S. Senate special committee was convened to investigate organized crime. During its deliberations, the committee discussed the influence of comic books on crime, with one participant stating, "...that type of crime comic book which blueprints an actual crime is harmful to the enforcement of the law to a considerable degree. I have had cases under my jurisdiction of boys who have imitated almost exactly the pattern found in some of these crime comic books."

SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT

The claim that the depiction of crimes committed in comic books were copied by children was the basis of a large part of Wertham's famous 1954 book *Seduction of the Innocent*. He sighted case after case of juvenile delinquency in which each offender subsequently "admitted" that the crime was inspired by a scene in a comic book.

The truth, however, of many of these admissions is questionable. Following the initial public uproar over comics in 1948, newspapers and magazines were indeed full of reports of juvenile crimes that reportedly copied crimes depicted in comics; a number of these admissions may have been elicited because the children quickly learned that placing the blame on comics was an easy way to gain sympathy. A May 31, 1948 *Time* piece told of two young children who stole an airplane and flew it 120 miles before landing it perfectly. Upon being questioned by police, the kids said they learned to fly from comic books!

It was Wertham's tendency to gloss over such indications contrary to his views that so enraged his opponents in the comic industry, and that made *Seduction* the subject of ridicule among comic fans in the intervening years. It often seemed that the only thing Wertham did not miss in *Seduction* was the opportunity to attack the comic industry on every front.

Although he prefaced the book by saying that not all comics are bad—only crime comics—Wertham gave himself license to attack all comics by stating, "...crime comic books are comic books that depict crime, whether the setting is urban, Western, science fiction, jungle, adventure, or the realm of supermen, 'horror,' or supernatural beings."

Besides this blanket condemnation of the vast majority of published comics, there is much more that has traditionally been criticized about *Seduction*. One notable point Wertham's detractors brought up was that his results were drawn from a study of only juvenile delinquents, when in fact the vast majority of children of the time read comics. Wertham dismissed this argument in *Seduction* by saying, "I have studied children who do not commit overt acts of delinquency...The more subtle the influence is, the more detrimental it may be." This implies that children who read comics but don't become delinquent are worse off than those who read comics and *do* become delinquent!

Wertham's insistence that comics were a children's medium was an additional deficiency of *Seduction*. During World War II, comic publishers began to realize that adults were a part of their audience, due to the large number of U.S. soldiers who read comics. After the war, publishers naturally began adjusting some of their output to accommodate this emerging audience. Wertham ignored the opposing opinion on this point in an encounter he described in *Seduction*. He offered his views on comics to a civic leader, for whose group he was about to lecture. She responded that her 11-year-old daughter was allowed to read only funny animal comics, and that "I would never let [other kinds of comics] come into my home and she would never read them. As for what you said about crime comics, Doctor, they are only read by adults." This woman's sensible viewpoint—that parents were responsible for monitoring their children's reading habits—and her opinion of the adult nature of crime comics were dismissed by Wertham, and he merely concluded from the encounter that he had his work cut out for him in turning public opinion.

Wertham's most insidious method of condemning the comic industry was his frequent assignment of guilt by association. Lots of kids who committed crimes read comics, and therefore, according to Wertham, comics were the

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Wertham carefully chose all of the illustrations he would use to support his arguments. The baseball scene "Foul Play," from The Haunt of Fear *#19 (1953), is the first illustration Wertham shows in* Seduction, *and was also the first specific example he used in his testimony before the Senate Subcommittee.*

The classic "injury-to-the-eye" shot (above) was used to illustrate comics' extreme perversion and brutality. Wertham's comment on the Phantom Lady *cover (at right): "Sexual stimulation by combining 'headlights' with the sadist's dream of tying up a woman."*

Phantom Lady #17 © Fox Features Syndicate. *True Crimes* #2 © Magazine Village.

© 1954 L. L. Publishing Company, Inc.

After Wertham's compelling testimony at the hearings, EC publisher William Gaines had a tough time eloquently explaining this cover to skeptical senators.

cause of juvenile delinquency. In making this conclusion, Wertham pointedly ignored any other factors involved. One sequence near the beginning of *Seduction* chronicled the plight of a 14-year-old boy whom Wertham had known for some time. The boy had been treated at the Lafargue Clinic since he was virtually an infant. He had come to live in an apartment in Harlem in New York City with his aunt—and, oh yes, he was "...a rabid comic book reader. He doted on them. He spent a large part of the money he earned to buy them." Events transpired during which the boy allegedly shot and killed a man. Although he was not convicted of this crime because the murder weapon was never found, he was sentenced to the state reformatory after being convicted on another charge.

Wertham's conclusion about this unfortunate sequence of events was typical. It wasn't the kid's tough neighborhood that turned him bad, nor any difficulty his aunt had in raising him after the separation of his parents, that resulted in his juvenile delinquency. The fact that a free psychiatric clinic (Wertham's own) which had contact with him for years, failed to treat him properly, had nothing to do with it. No—according to Wertham, it was the boy's obsession with comics that led to this crime.

Faced with such tactics, it has been alleged that some factions within the comic book industry responded in kind. A deal to make *Seduction* a Book of the Month Club selection was mysteriously killed. *Seduction* was distributed with its bibliography pages—which identified the comic publishers whose material was used in the book's illustrations—cut out after publication. The details of how this came to be are unknown, but it is assumed that interests in the comic industry pressured publisher Rinehart & Co. to slice out the pages at the last minute, after the book had been printed.

While the particulars of those events are unknown, it can be verified that the industry retained a public relations firm to guide it through the crisis. In his 1969 book *The Corporate Oligarch,* David Finn confirmed that his company "...acted as public-relations counsel to the Comic Magazine Association at the time," and went on to explain how he helped the industry institute the Comics Code that, in modified form, is still in effect today.

THE SENATE INVESTIGATIONS

The Comics Code was brought about by the conclusions of 1954 U.S. Senate Subcommittee hearings which investigated the effect of comic books on juvenile delinquency. Wertham's campaign and *Seduction* itself (which had been published just prior to the hearings) were extremely influential on the Senate committee. During the hearings, Wertham and other experts on juvenile delinquency were called to testify, as was EC Publisher William Gaines, representatives of Marvel, DC, Dell, and various comic distributors, advertisers, and retailers.

Newspaper strip artists Walt Kelly (the creator of *Pogo*), Milton Caniff (creator of *Steve Canyon*), and Joe Musial (cartoonist on *The Katzenjammer Kids* following the original creator's death) appeared as representatives of the National Cartoonists Society to present their perspective on the comic book business. Their testimony served to distance newspaper strips from comic books, and generally condemn the comic book industry. When asked during the hearing about what he would do if he discovered that a comic book artist was a member of the Society, Kelly said, "I don't know. Maybe invite them outside."

It is in this sort of atmosphere that representatives of the industry had to testify. EC's Gaines rose to the challenge admirably. A second generation industry veteran who also held a teaching degree, Gaines answered all of the committee's questions calmly and clearly. Marvel and DC's representatives didn't fare quite as well, since both publishers had sent businessmen who weren't intimately familiar with the editorial content of the comics they helped produce. This decision on the publishers' part was understandable—both men were questioned very closely about the operations of their companies, which were, by then, already sizable and complex businesses. When it came to the specifics of the contents of their comics, however, they both seemed vague and evasive.

Wertham's testimony echoed the sentiments he had presented in *Seduction*, and he delivered it flawlessly. By then, he had extensive experience in such situations. In 1951 he had testified on the bad influence of comics in front of a committee of the New York State Legislature. Furthermore, he had spent considerable time testifying on the psychiatric aspects of criminal behavior. In 1952 he had testified in Delaware Chancery Court against school segregation. That May, just a month after his testimony to the Senate against comic books, his testimony in the Delaware case became an important piece of evidence in the U.S. Supreme Court case Brown vs. Board of Education. In this landmark decision, one of the most famous in the history of the U.S., the U.S. Supreme Court found racial discrimination in U.S. public schools unconstitutional. When the Senate committee on juvenile delinquency reconvened in June to finish its investigation, the opinions of the respected Dr. Wertham most certainly weighed heavily in its conclusions.

On June 5, 1954 the chairman of the committee, Senator Robert C. Hendrickson, summed up the committee's immediate conclusions by saying:

"I think I speak for the entire subcommittee when I say that any action on the part of the...publishers of crime and horror comic books, or upon the part of distributors,...wholesalers, or dealers with reference to these materials which will tend to eliminate from...production and sale, shall receive the acclaim of my colleagues and myself. A competent job of self-policing within the industry will achieve much."

The comic industry took the hint and subsequently formed the Comics Magazine Association of America. The CMAA adopted the Comics Code on October 26, 1954, and set up the means to administer it. The Comics Code is a set of guidelines to which the comics of member publishers must adhere in order to

receive the Comics Code seal. At that time, newsstand distributors would not handle comic books not bearing the Code seal. Some publishers had considerable difficulty functioning under the Code, and either modified their output drastically (EC eventually dropped most of its titles), or went out of business. One reason for such a drastic change was the Code's regulation restricting comics with the words "Horror," "Terror," or "Crime" in their titles.

The Senate Subcommittee noted its approval of the Comics Code in its final report on the hearings, published in 1955, saying "It is the consensus of the subcommittee that the establishment of this new association, the adoption of a code, and the appointment of a code administrator are steps in the right direction."

Although the subcommittee seemed to have noticed some of the flaws in Wertham's arguments, noting that further study on delinquent children's complete environments must be made to determine the extent of any role of comics in juvenile delinquency, it still voiced grave concern over that possible role:

"...the subcommittee wishes to reiterate its belief that this country cannot afford the calculated risk involved in feeding its children, through comic books, a concentrated diet of crime, horror, and violence. There was substantial, although not unanimous, agreement among the experts that there may be detrimental and delinquency-producing effects upon both the emotionally disturbed child and the emotionally normal delinquent. Children of either type may gain suggestion, support, and sanction from reading crime and horror comics."

© DC Comics

Wertham and the Senate hearings succeeded in forcing the comic industry to abandon the crime and horror genre of comic books. But was that the right thing to do? We submit that the Code-approved, "wholesome" Lois Lane *comic shown above seems to pose a far greater chance of harmfully influencing children.*

Noting that it did not propose to censor comics with legislation to address these concerns, the Senate subcommittee nonetheless warned that if the new Code didn't do its job, the issue would be brought up again: "At any rate, the subcommittee is convinced that if this latest effort at industry self-regulation does not succeed, then other ways and means must—and will—be found to prevent our Nation's young from being harmed by crime and horror comic books."

© The Comic Magazine Association of America

MAN WITHOUT A MISSION

1954 proved to be the year of Fredric Wertham's finest moments. Having essentially accomplished what he set out to do by playing a major role in causing significant reforms in the comic industry, his subsequent work seemed to lack the focus and intensity that he had previously had. In 1958, his fifth book *The Circle of Guilt* was published. *Circle* examined what he felt was a trend of diminishing responsibility in American society. He believed people were feeling less and less obliged to take responsibility for their actions, resulting in a higher level of violence. Wertham felt that comics and other mass media contributed to this trend. His 1966 book *A Sign for Cain* was a general investigation of human violence. He mentioned comics briefly in this book, although it appears that he did not update his research since the original seven-year study that led to *Seduction*.

Wertham's final book serves as a curious conclusion to his long career. In that book, 1973's *The World of Fanzines*, Wertham examines a certain group that had already become a significant subculture of our society, namely comic and science fiction fandom, and its unique form of communication: the fanzine. Fanzines are amateur magazines produced by and for people with an interest in comics, science fiction, and a variety of other fantasy-related subjects. They were created and distributed (with circulations in the hundreds or even in the dozens) for little or no money, among fans who shared like interests.

It seems that all the comic-reading kids of the '50s, who Wertham was sure were going be ruined by their hobby, had turned out all right after all. They had grown up to create a medium of communication that, in Wertham's words, "constitutes a vivid and vital kind of method of interchange of thoughts and opinion." He continued, "Fanzines show a combination of independence and responsibility not easily found elsewhere in our culture," and eventually concluded that, "achievements such as fanzines...are worthwhile and constructive. Communication is the opposite of violence. And every facet of communication has a legitimate place."

To say that it is hard to believe that this was written by the same person who wrote *Seduction of the Innocent* is a gross understatement. Wertham's enthusiasm for fanzines and the people who wrote and read them was a complete departure from what he had written in *Seduction*. According to him, these fans had benefited from their experiences with comics and science fiction, and didn't become criminals. He never said so, but it almost seems like the fans proved to him that he was wrong about comics.

Fredric Wertham died on November 18, 1981 at the age of 86. It can be said without reservation that he had a distinguished career in psychiatry and that he never shied away from controversy or position. He clearly campaigned against comics because of a strong belief that they were bad for children. What is less clear, though, is to what extent his deeply held convictions impaired his ability to properly study the issue. ☆

William Christensen and Mark Seifert are freelance writers based in Illinois. *Special thanks to retailer Harry Thomas, of Nashville, Tenn. and Jordon Peugh at New York University for their invaluable research assistance.*

BRAVURA™
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HE'S BACK!
WITH AN ALL NEW SERIES!
'BREED II™
NOVEMBER '94
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KA POW SPLAT! THWIP! BLAM!!!
FOOM! THOOM! SNIKT SPLASH

WE SPEAK THE LANGUAGE!

WIZARD™
THE GUIDE TO COMICS

BOOM

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WIZARD®

CAULDRON OF TERROR

Look at you...cowering in fear at just the name of this contest. Well, don't you worry yourself...we're not planning on cooking the winners or anything. We *are* planning on giving you all the scary stuff you can eat, though! Two frighteningly lucky people, one who's 17 or under and one 18 or over, will be flooded with more monstrous goodies than you can shake a maggot-riddled corpse at. So read on...

Grand Prize (for people 18 or over)

One huge—you got it—*cauldron* of monstrous goodies all for you!

We'll load you up with 15 fear-filled movies, ranging from *Halloween* to *The Shining*, four of Anne Rice's thrilling vampire novels, four nail-bitin' Stephen King novels, a copy of the *Lady Death: The Reckoning* Limited Edition Hardcover book, a Silver Edition of our *Dark Book* signed by cover artist Nelson, the Universal Monsters and *Tales from the Crypt* trading card sets, tons of candy to rot your anxiously awaiting teeth, and, to top it all off, a Frankenstein's Monster cold-cast statue from Dark Horse!

Grand Prize II (for people 17 or under)

Another enormous cauldron, packed with 14 classic horror flicks like the original Boris Karloff *Frankenstein* movie and the unforgettable *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, a bunch of PVC Universal Monsters figures, that Silver, signed-by-Nelson *Dark Book*, those cool Universal Monsters and *Tales from the Crypt* card sets, a couple o' *Tales from the Crypt Keeper* comics (based on the Saturday Morning cartoon) from EC, enough candy to give you such a sugar high you won't come down till the year 2001, and an awesome-looking King Kong soft vinyl kit from Dark Horse!

An extra-special thanks goes out to the people at Dark Horse for their contribution of the statues. You guys are cool with a capital C!

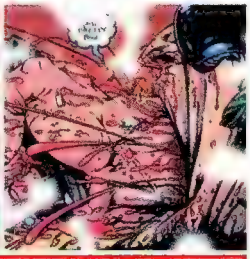
You know you want all that stuff! You know you'll do anything to get it! Well, we've made it very doable—just take a gander at these five sick, horrible comic book scenes, and figure out what particular issues they're from!

PANEL 1

PANEL 2

PANEL 3

PANEL 4



PANEL 5

That's all you gotta do, other than filling out the form below (with the correct answers, o' course—we're lookin' for the particular issues here, with numbers, people) and mailing in your completed entry to:

Cauldron of Terror Contest

c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

ENTRIES DUE BY DEC. 29, 1994!

Two more important things—please enclose documented proof of your age, whether you're 10, 20, or 120 years old! And hurry—your deadline's December 29, 1994! If we receive your entry after that date, *Wizard* Editorial Assistant Bob "The Undertaker" Marshall will come to your house and Shake-n-Bake™ your pet.

LETHAL LEGAL JARGON

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Chaos! Comics, Universal Pictures, Cardz, EC, and Dark Horse, their immediate families, and that gross worm thing that Craig T. Nelson threw-up in *Poltergeist II*. Eeeyuch! Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, age, and telephone number with area code, along with the five particular issues in which the five displayed panels appeared, on the official entry form or a three-by-five-inch index card, and staple a photocopy of a birth certificate, driver's license, or other document proving your age to the form or card. To be eligible to win each prize, the contestant must be in the appropriate age range, and must provide proof of age. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Cauldron of Terror Contest, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. Whatever you do, don't open that door. PLEASE! Don't open that...AAAIIIEEEEE!!! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by December 29, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 3, 1995, by Wizard Press.

For the names of the winners, available after January 20, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Cauldron Winners, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just keep watching *Wizard*!

WINNER!

Congratulations to Mathias Reeve of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, the winner of *Wizard #37*'s Maximum Carnage Contest!
Wrongly Accused Villains: Hobgoblin and Shocker

Official Cauldron of Terror Entry Coupon

I am:

NAME (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY)

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

AGE

PHONE (DON'T FORGET YOUR AREA CODE)

Issue panel #1 appeared in

Issue panel #2 appeared in

Issue panel #3 appeared in

Issue panel #4 appeared in

Issue panel #5 appeared in

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A Tale from the Crypt

A HISTORY OF HORROR IN COMICS • BY ROBERT HAMBRECHT

It's Alive!

It's midnight, of course. The wind is howling, cats are wailing, and the sky is streaked with bolts of pulsating electricity. You're in a graveyard running from sickening creatures with rotting flesh that drips off their brittle bones. Then, you're back in your car on a desolate road in the middle of absolutely nowhere.

The car won't start. You're stuck.

But wait, there's a house in the distance. You head out to it, praying that the owner has a shred of decency—or at least a phone. The windows are all boarded up, save for a single cracked one, way up at the top. You check the door instead...and it opens with a sharp creak, almost before you touch it.

Beads of perspiration trickle down your forehead as you enter the gloomy hallway.

Suddenly, the flickering candles extinguish as one. You feel a hot, heavy breath on your neck. You brace yourself, and only then do you feel the icy grip clench your shoulder...

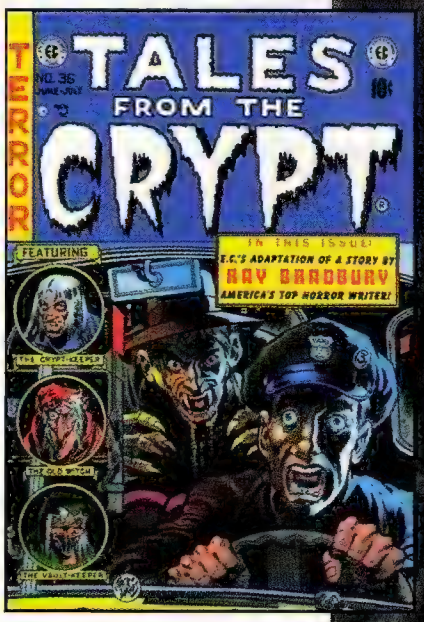
"Genres," states Steve Bissette, "whether [it be] western, romance, horror, science fiction, adventure, or what-have-you, are languages. When a reader opens a horror comic and the first panel is a scary house on a hill, it communicates volumes to a reader with a single image. That is the dynamite we get to play with."

Horror comics began by borrowing from existing literature, and later made use of the potential of the comics medium in an interesting and powerful manner, in order to cut through new, once-unbreakable barriers. *Vampirella* and *Swamp Thing* typify the superhero/horror hybrids that live today as part of the particularly unique self-genesis of comic book horror. Mystery, crime, and horror comics flourished in the late '40s, during which titles like *Law Breakers, Crime and Punishment* and *Real Clue Crime Stories* created horror out of everyday crime scenes.

Early horror comics didn't have to dig that far for material. Youthful American psyches clung to images of film monsters like the Wolfman, Dracula, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon. Horror comics have always existed in tandem with other media, as each influenced the other. The film *The Night of the Living Dead* could very easily have been a *Tales from the Crypt* story. Another film, *Re-animator*, mirrors "Shrieking Man," a story from Warren Publications's 1966 *Eerie* #4—written by Archie Goodwin and illustrated by macabre master Steve Ditko—right down to the defect in the serum that fails to restore dead people's sanity. Both stories, however, echo the frightening work of author H.P. Lovecraft.

In some 45 years, the film and comics industries have used enough electricity birthing Frankenstein monsters to light up all of New York City. Stereotyped monsters exhumed from film vaults in order to stalk living comic readers, pale in comparison to the innovative directions in which comic book writers and artists have taken the horror genre. Vertigo's Swamp Thing and John Constantine, and even Marvel Comics's Thing and the Hulk, can all retrace their ancestry back to the hauntingly familiar early horror comics.

Back in the '40s, comics—mainly dominated by superheroes—had to catch up with the horror scene. Something major had to occur to knock superheroes out of the spotlight, if only long enough to establish other types of comics. And happen it did, with the ending of World War II. Atlas Comics, later to become Marvel Comics, published *Marvel Tales* #93 (formerly *Marvel Mystery Comics*—home of the original Human Torch and other Timely/Atlas superheroes), converting this former superhero comic into a horror title during the twilight of the Golden Age. Costumed crime fighters truly had to face their fears now. Superheroes, along with the military, had beaten the Axis powers in



Both the EC comics of the '50s (inset at right) and Topps Comics's movie adaptation of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (opposite) succeed in pushing the boundaries of the comic medium.

TALES FROM THE CRYPT ™ & © WILLIAM M. GAINES. MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN © 1994 TRISTAR PICTURES, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

"Horror fiction at its best is in the business of pushing back the barriers, of risking the absurd in order to reach the sublime."
—Ramsey Campbell, from the introduction to DC Comics's Saga of the Swamp Thing trade paperback

WWII, and it was time for something new. As the Golden Age of Comics ended, non-superhero genres, such as war, western, and horror, rose from the grave and flourished.

From Cradle to Grave

Dateline 1950: Americans seek security. They move to the new *Leave It to Beaver* suburbs. The Korean War begins. Senator Joseph McCarthy sparks paranoia over communism in the United States. EC Comics begins publishing *The Vault of Horror*, *The Crypt of Terror* (later called *Tales from the Crypt*), and *The Haunt of Fear*.

The first appearance of EC Comics's horror line equals any other 1950 comic milestone and reflects all the previously mentioned events. The Korean War prompted creator Harvey Kurtzman to develop EC's anti-war titles, *Frontline Combat* and *Two-Fisted Tales*, comics that visually reflect EC's horror style. The McCarthy communist witch hunts in America proved horrendous, not only to EC, but to comics as an art form.

EC's original success lay in a formula of horror hosts, surprise endings, and superior artwork. Such masters as Jack Davis, Wally Wood, Reed Crandell, Graham Ingles, and Jack Kamen, among others, developed a realistic visual style that has become an essential part of comic art.

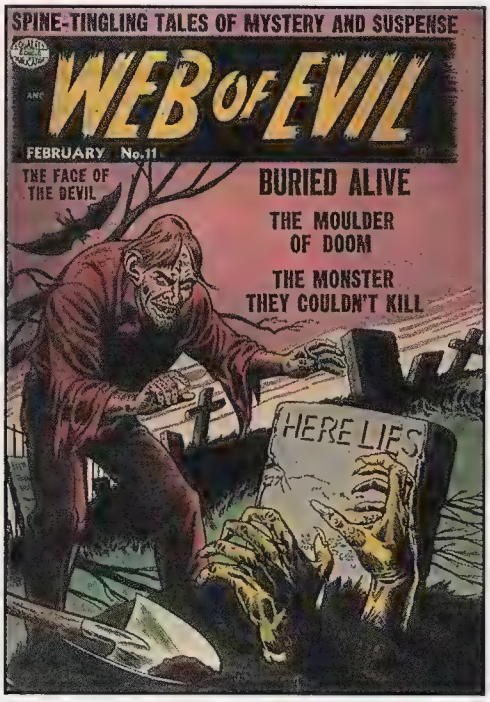
William Gaines, who inherited the floundering Educational Comics (later changed to Entertaining Comics) from his father Max Gaines, admittedly "borrowed" plots from literature and old magazines. Russ Cochran, who publishes monthly reprints and bound reprint books of EC Comics for Gemstone Publishing, explains, "Gaines himself was a science fiction fan. He read pulp magazines and science fiction stories...He borrowed a ton of stuff, but I think there's more of a wide range of horror ideas with science fiction. With EC horror stuff, after you've done a few vampires and a few werewolves and a couple of ghouls, you start repeating yourself. So I think the magic stayed around a little longer with the science fiction titles."

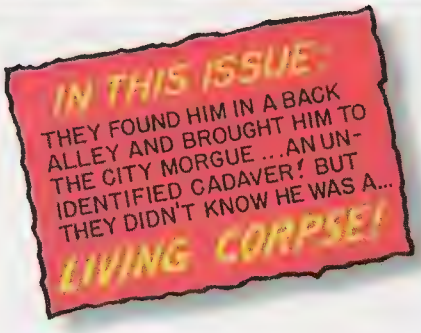
The most famous ripped-off stories were those from renowned speculative fiction author Ray Bradbury. Cochran reprints a portion of an interview with Gaines in Volume 3 of the *Weird Fantasy* box set (published by Gemstone), where Gaines declares, "We swiped a few Bradbury stories and he caught us! But he was a real gentleman and wrote us a very nice letter suggesting that we had forgotten to pay him a royalty." Bradbury started writing stories for EC in 1952, mainly in the science fiction titles *Weird Fantasy* and *Weird Science*.

Real life terror, however, killed EC and carved up its corpse. EC had propagated a series of bad imitations: horror comics lacking good artistry and finesse. Graphic, unimaginative portrayals of dead and dismembered bodies littered the pages of comics from publishers who wanted to ride EC's coattails. Those publishers caught the attention and vivid imagination of New York psychologist Dr. Fredric Wertham. His attacks on comics were particularly vitriolic when it came to horror and crime comics, planting the seeds that led to the death of EC and the birth of the Comics Code Authority. (For more on Wertham, see page 92.)

The true horror continued as seen in the documentary film *Comic Book Confidential*, which portrays comic book burnings, and fictionalized scenes of young boys resorting to violence after reading comics. William Gaines was called to testify in front of the Estes Kefauver Senate Subcommittee on crime and juvenile delinquency.

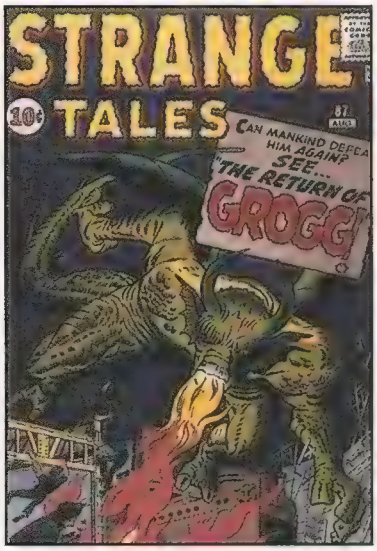
"Gaines felt victimized by [the Comics Code/Senate hearings]," reveals Cochran.





In the '50s, kids couldn't get enough of books like The Haunt of Fear *and* Web of Evil. *Mummies, werewolves, monsters, and vampires were the order of the day.*

The Haunt of Fear and "In This Issue" box TM & © William M. Gaines.
TM & © 1954 Comic Magazines Inc.



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With the advent of the Comics Code Authority, horror comics were forced to tone things down more than a bit. Grogg (left) was plenty "strange," but probably didn't give kids too many nightmares. Warren Publications found a way to bypass the Code: print comics in a magazine-size format, such as Creepy *(below).*

"But it was a function of the times we were living in. Just look at the difference in movies today—showing violence and blood compared to back then. He was on the cutting edge of all that. Gaines still kept a transcript of his testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency. I know that he was a strong believer that these books never harmed anyone and that they were in fact good escape literature. He defended them as long as he could, but once they got this Comics Code thing going—since his horror books were the ones paying for the whole ball game anyway, and those were just shot right out of the saddle—it really finished him off."

EC, because of the high visibility of its horror and crime titles, bore the brunt of the attack. Staying alive for a while with the innovative New Directions line, sporting titles like *Psychoanalysis*, *Piracy*, *Aces High*, and *Impact*, EC narrowly avoided oblivion by salvaging *Mad* and converting it to a magazine.

"Once Gaines made the jump from comic books into *Mad*, he didn't look back that much," recounts Cochran. "But it turns out in retrospect to not have been so terrible. [Gaines] made a lot more money with *Mad* than he ever made with the comic books. Another point he made to me was that, in a way, the Comics Code Authority saved him. It made the [EC] comics legends."

The stifling Comics Code mainly outlined what could not be included in comics—which was just about everything in the original ECs, except, ironically, for the all-pervasive "crime does not pay" message that appeared in dozens of EC stories. The Comics Code halted the development of the comics medium for more than 20 years, and comics have still not completely recovered today.

The 1950s, which gave birth to horror comics, were also responsible for burying them. By that time, horror comics, it seemed, had died.

Monsters on the Prowl

Atlas/Marvel kept afloat during the '50s with its own line of science fiction/horror titles that established a proving ground for the vision and style that eventually became the Marvel Age of Comics. The Atlas monster/horror comics were tame in graphic content, but extremely vibrant in terms of artists like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko.

Some of Atlas/Marvel's core sci-fi/horror books—like *Journey into Mystery*, *Tales of Suspense*, *Tales to Astonish*, *Amazing Adult Fantasy*, and *Strange Tales*—featured such heart-stopping stories as "Yes! This is Really LO-KARR, Bringer of Doom!" and "Behold GOOM!...The Thing from Planet X."

Atlas horror stories owed their existence to the larger-than-life style of Jack Kirby and the psychedelic surrealism of Steve Ditko, creating the overall look and feel of the Atlas books. The duo perfected their styles, which would become easily recognizable to a new generation of comic readers.

Many of the Atlas titles—*Strange Worlds*, *Astonishing*, *Strange Tales of the Unusual*, and *Strange Stories of Suspense*, to name a few—lived and died totally in the '50s. Many of the same great artists who later became synonymous with EC—Bernard Krigstein, Joe Kubert, and Basil Wolverton—contributed to Atlas's growing horde of horror titles.

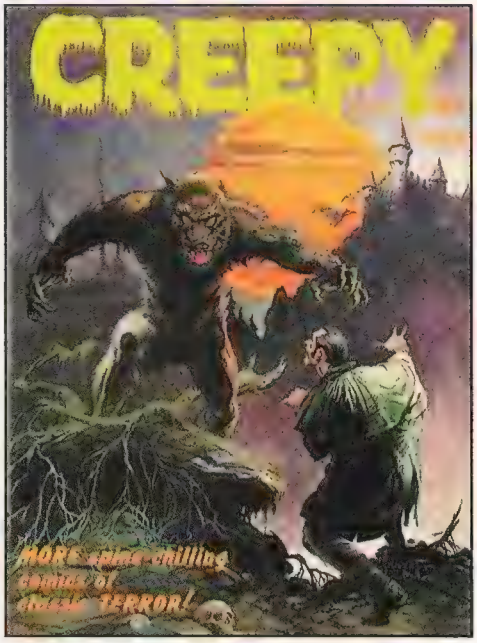
The classic Marvel monsters thrived after the Wertham brouhaha, however, and simply evolved beyond primitive monsters. *Fantasy Masterpieces*, which ran for 11 issues in 1966 and reprinted early Marvel horror/sci-fi tales, was the first time that Marvel tried letting its creatures run amok once more. A series of 1971 titles, including *Creatures on the Loose* and *Monsters on the Prowl*, were meant to compete with DC's more successful *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets*. Five years ago, Marvel published *Monster Masterworks*, a trade paperback collecting these early works. In December '93/January '94, Marvel made its third attempt at re-presenting the original horror stories, with the Mort Todd-edited books—*Curse of the Werewolf*, *Monster Menace*, *Book of the Dead*, *Spider-Man vs. Dracula*, and *Dr. Strange vs. Dracula*. Todd employed the long-reclusive Steve Ditko to do new original covers and artwork for the run.

The mid- to late-'50s and early '60s remain the era when Marvel's monsters roamed the Earth. In the fearsome grip of the Comics Code, Marvel kept the horror genre alive, saving itself for greater glory. Monsters like "Glob," "Bruttu," and "Grogg" may not have scared anyone, but their giant footsteps pounded out a new path for superhero comics and left a trail for horror comics to follow.

An Eerie Rebirth

By changing *Mad*'s format from comic book size to magazine size in 1955, Gaines avoided the Comics Code Authority—the Code only monitored comics. In 1964, Warren Publications did the same by bringing back the exciting and—at the time—daring graphic imagery, high quality art, and evocative scripts of an EC book in a magazine format. Warren's first horror title was *Creepy*, followed by *Eerie* the next year, and *Vampirella* in 1969, which all saw print into the mid-1980s. Their style and approach made them modern ECs, complete with horror hosts Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie, whose bad end-of-story puns would make even the Old Witch of *Haunt of Fear* turn in her grave.

"It appeared that what [publisher] Jim Warren did," Cochran observes, "was to go out and round up a lot of the old EC guys and find them an umbrella they could work under again." Warren's books, at their best, not only qualitatively equaled ECs, but sometimes went beyond them—especially under the editorship of Archie Goodwin, now an editor for DC. The EC artists—Reed Crandall, Al Williamson, Angelo Torres, Jack Davis, and Wally Wood—contributed some of their best work, and they were joined by other vet-



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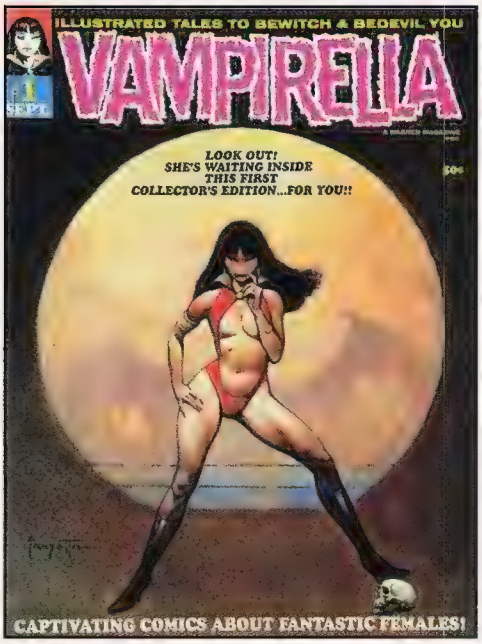

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eran artists like Steve Ditko (who had recently left Marvel's *Amazing Spider-Man*), Gray Morrow, Russ Heath, and Joe Orlando.

The Warrens paralleled the ECs in script as well as in art. Relying on surprise, twist-of-fate endings, Warren re-established the quality of '50s EC in horror titles as well as war comics like *Blazing Combat*. Like EC, Warren applied a horror base to other genres. *Creepy* #89, an "All War Special," depicted the same kind of gritty, realistic battlefield imagery used in *Blazing Combat*, while exploring other sides of war like tasty cannibalism and grueling battle fatigue.

The early Warrens very subtly strayed from the EC path. They included imagery that had been banned for 15 years and then some—particularly some nudity and graphic horror that would never have made it in the '50s. Warren re-established the EC tradition and erased horror comics' negative stigma by presenting intelligent, well-executed work, skirting the restrictions of the Comics Code in the more respectable and untouchable magazine format.

Warren's *Vampirella* added a soft-core sexual touch to its line. A horror host herself, Vampirella, besides being more attractive and a better kisser than Uncle Creepy and Cousin Eerie, had her own origin and stories. In stories recently reprinted in a graphic novel format co-published by Harris Comics and Dark Horse Comics, she was an alien vampire from the planet Drakulon who fought a continuous battle with the necromancer occult group Chaos. Vampirella also had in-law problems with the disapproving father of her lover Adam van Helsing. For the '60s, Vampirella was pretty racy, especially for a mostly young teenage audience. Artists Tom Sutton, Jose Gonzalez, and Gonzalo Mayo maintained Vampi's voluptuousness, while Archie Goodwin and Bill DuBay wrote the scripts that established a character who's now thoroughly enjoying a successful monthly run with Harris Publications.

Harris's new *Vampirella* may physically look the same, but varies greatly in the type of horror. Warren's *Vampirella* was never really very graphic. Vampirella's appeal lay in her sexuality, rather than in her being a vampire. She used her vampiric powers to battle Chaos and others, and was not simply on a quest for human blood. And blood, since the Warren book was a black-and-white publication, was more hinted at than seen. Vampirella, especially for the late '60s and early '70s, was, and still is, a sexy character. And it is sex, not horror, that sold Warren's *Vampirella*.

Taboos Lifted

"My badge of success was when the book was busted in New Zealand," exclaims Steve Bissette proudly. "We were busted a number of times, but New Zealand [had] the only customs that actually seemed to read everything they busted, and *Taboo* passed with flying colors. The customs report stated that the material was presented in a very intelligent and mature manner, and it was certainly not for children. Then they passed it into the country. If I needed vindication, that was it."

Bissette is referring to *Taboo*, a book-size anthology of mind-blowing work by then little-known and unknown creators, created by him and fellow *Swamp Thing* alum John Totleben. *Taboo* discovered talents like Charles Burns, S. Clay Wilson, Eddie Campbell, and Richard Sala, as well as launching Jeff Nicholson's *Through the Habitrails*, Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell*, and Tim Lucas's *Throat Sprockets*.

Bissette and John Totleben asked themselves about where innovative and controversial work from budding writers and artists could get published in comics. The majors, still solidly in the grip of the Comics Code, couldn't—or wouldn't—try to buck the Authority, and undergrounds had pretty much run their course by the late '80s. Bissette and Totleben provided the venue for the exciting work they were witnessing that had no place to go.

"The great thing about *Taboo*," says Lucas, "was that it asked you to break all the rules about comics. There were no restrictions about subject matter. The only restriction, in fact, was that you create something that would break a kind of taboo. It was that prerequisite that got me thinking and gave me the idea for [*Throat Sprockets*]."

No psychotic, falsely informed, neurotic, anti-comic book mob ended *Taboo*'s run. Instead, the most horrifying of all evils killed it: money. "*Taboo* had to be a book," Bissette explains. "Many people have asked why I didn't do it as a comic. I don't think that *Taboo* could have been delivered in little bite-size fragments. It was packaged in the same way that cutting-edge horror fiction anthologies [were at the] time. This is literature, and these people are creative.

"I lost a fortune on *Taboo*. Tundra [the second publisher of *Taboo*] also lost a fortune getting those issues out. We were publishing a high-ticket book that was 'adults only.' We lost the ability to export to Canada and England because of the content, and because [of] those countries seizure of *Taboo* at customs. England has a standing law on the books, that was approved by Parliament in 1953 [and] was re-approved without debate in the early '60s, which basically outlawed American crime and horror comics. The law remains on the books...There was nothing like the board of censors in New Zealand."

Now self-publishing his massive 10-year project *Tyrant*, which depicts the complete life story of a Tyrannosaurus Rex, Bissette reflects on *Taboo* fondly. "*Taboo* became for me a sort of catharsis," Bissette explains. "John Totleben and I created *Taboo* in an attempt to go further than we had been permitted to go in *Swamp Thing*; further than we could go with a hero-driven periodical title."

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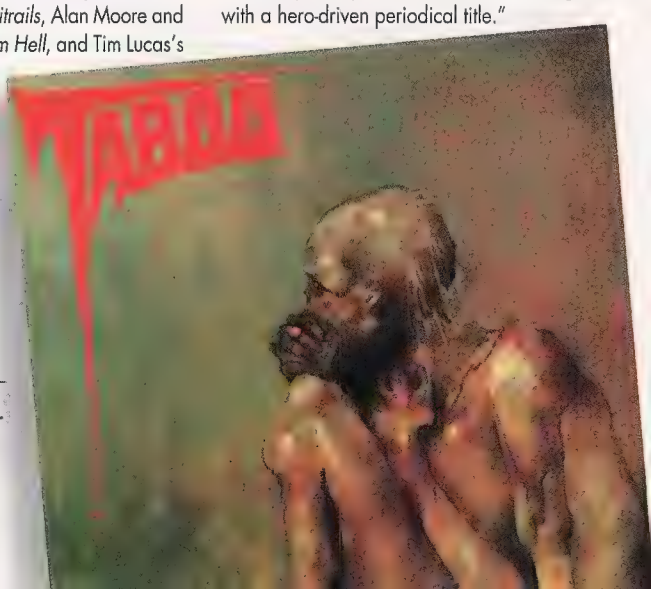
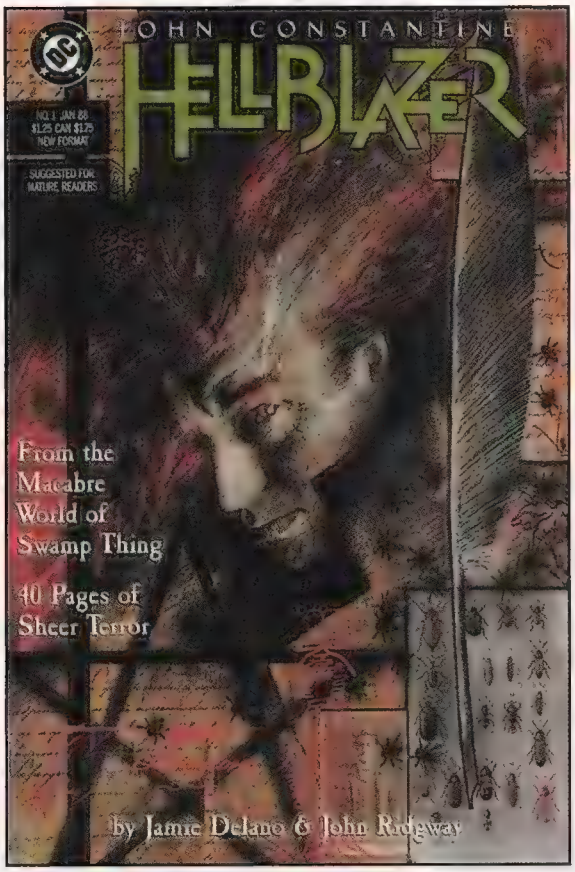


Warren continued to avoid the Code all the way through the '70s with Vampirella *(at top). The underground book* Taboo *(at right) was a financial failure, but gave up-and-coming artists a place to experiment beyond the limits of other publishers.*

A Touch of Vertigo

"It's the horror of everyday life that intrigues me," says former *Hellblazer* writer Jamie Delano. "It's a pretty miserable existence, isn't it? Generally speaking, that's what I like to talk about, rather necessarily, as I'm much better at it than dealing with demons, Hell, and Christ knows what. But, it's the human level of horror that I find personally the most terrifying, and I think most readers do as well."



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Vertigo's Hellblazer *is one of the cornerstone titles of the popular DC imprint.*

Certainly many do, evidenced by the success of DC's alternative imprint, Vertigo. After the long-overdue dilution of the Comics Code Authority's power, comics could experiment and stretch the genre confines. *Swamp Thing* of the early '70s took the first big steps. Writer Len Wein and artist Berni Wrightson gave their character humanistic proportions that paved the way for Alan Moore's writing in DC's *Saga of the Swamp Thing* during the '80s to deal with more modern, personal, and social horror. Moore has repeatedly used this approach in DC's *Watchmen* and *V for Vendetta*, as well as Kitchen Sink's *From Hell*, to shake comics—horror or otherwise—out of hibernation.

Vertigo's characters deal with life and death in an introspective way. Each title contains such a unique sensibility, that a change in writers adds an entirely new dimension to the series. Neil Gaiman's writing in the original *Black Orchid* mini-series differs greatly from Dick Foreman's work in the character's ongoing series. Garth Ennis focuses on different aspects of John Constantine in *Hellblazer* than Jamie Delano does, but both writers still make him an intriguing and compelling character.

John Constantine—a chain-smoking, alcoholic, womanizing magician—has made an enemy of Lucifer and a host of other demons by continually outwitting them in deadly bouts for his own soul. Constantine beat cancer by pitting the very forces of Hell against each other. Delano, who wrote the first 20 issues or so of *Hellblazer*, says, "In many ways, John Constantine is quite a special character. It's one of the few completely human characters that DC/Vertigo has. You can't rely on all the sort of stock in trade comic book writing to animate him." Delano will revisit the title with a one-shot in issue #84.

Vertigo recently collected the five-part *Jonah Hex: Two-Gun Mojo*, in which Hex battles a zombie Wild Bill Hickock, in trade paperback form. The mini-series demonstrates the caliber that has established Vertigo, which currently boasts over a dozen high-quality titles. According to *Information Entertainment*—an internal Time/Warner publication—Vertigo would be the sixth biggest comic book company in sales if it were independent.

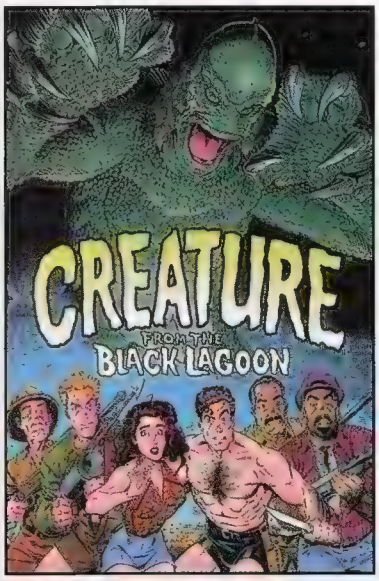
All Hell Breaks Loose

The literature responsible for creating the horror genre now comes full circle with *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*—a four-issue mini-series by Topps Comics, adapting the upcoming film version of the literary classic. Some of today's best modern horror titles include Dark Horse's *Universal Monster* books which adapt the famous films, Milestone Media's *Xombi* about a hero who cannot die, and on a more mainstream comic book horror approach, Jae Lee's supernatural *Hellshock* published by Image Comics.

But the ghost of 1950s ECs stalks comic book stores, reaching out a withered hand to grab the older, already infected fans with publisher Russ Cochran's reprints of the original EC line, as well as sinking its pointed teeth into the innocent necks of a new generation. EC horror comics spawned the oft-used *Vault of Horror* and *Tales from the Crypt* image of a fetid, decayed corpse returning for revenge. EC's original horror titles, as well as the science fiction and war comics, can never truly fade away. You can buy EC titles just as you would new comics right on the shelves; they're in direct competition with new, post-modern horror titles. EC's continued freshness and marketability remains the greatest tribute of all to the genius of William M. Gaines.

"There is a fear of the horror genre," Bissette observes. "[There is] a prevalent attitude which most people in comics are familiar with, [that says] there must be something wrong with someone who writes or draws that kind of material. Our culture still harbors the guilt [of] association with comics and still harbors a suspicion of the medium. That's why this current generation of work excites me. They didn't grow up with that. They grew up with *Maus* [Art Spiegelman's retelling of the holocaust] in the bookstores, and comics in alternative newspapers, where it was just another part of the culture along with music, film, and videos. We may finally be entering an era, if we're allowed to see our way through it, where our culture may shed that baggage." ☆

Robert Hambrecht has read and collected comics for more than 30 years, and has written for Dark Horse/Byron Press's New Two-Fisted Tales, Comics Scene, High Times, Creem, Reflex, New Review, American Book Review, Toward Freedom, *and other publications.*



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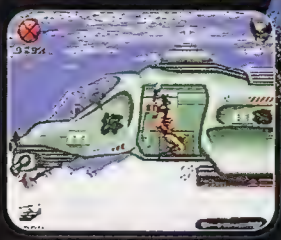
Hmmm...smells like fish...must be one of those Dark Horse Universal Monster books.



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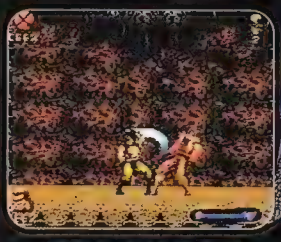
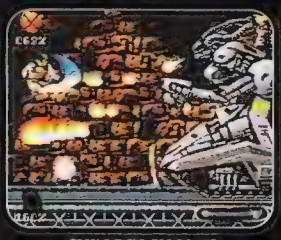
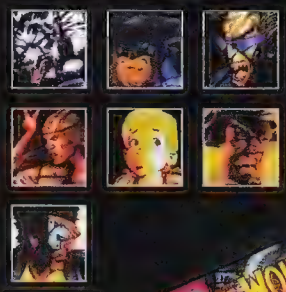


CLAW MEETS TOOTH

I SAW THAT, BUB



SHINOBI SHAW'S ARMORED ASSASSIN



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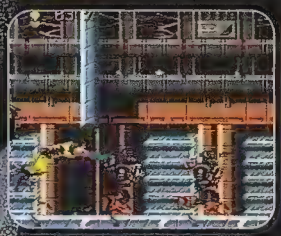

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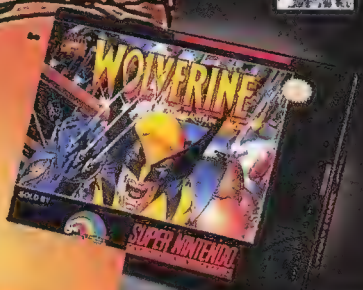

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G.I. JOE NO MORE

Hasbro has announced that it will discontinue the 3-and-3/4-inch G.I. Joe toy line by the end of the year. It can certainly be said that these Joes have had a longer life than most boys' toy lines. The figures debuted in 1982 after Joe had taken a hiatus for a few years due to poor sales of the old 12-inch original toy line. After the success of the *Star Wars* line by Kenner a few years prior, which was the first successful toy line in the 3-and-3/4-inch format, all toy companies began looking at this format as a new, viable option—especially Hasbro.

The 3-and-3/4-inch G.I. Joe line went through several changes over its long run. While the series started off with a very militaristic feel, Hasbro slowly began to change towards more fantastic concepts as time went by. The Joes began to get into ecological matters, monsters, and eventually into the final frontier of space. But now, Hasbro has decided that it is time to head back to its original military roots.

So now, after 12 years, another era of toy history closes. There have been rumors that the more familiar 3-and-3/4-inch figures will return sometime in the future, but it's neither been confirmed nor denied.

The question that now comes to mind is what will Hasbro do to fill this hole in its product line? Well, say hello to Sgt. Savage and the Screaming Eagles. These new figures will be in a larger 4-and-1/2-inch size and will have a more heroic look. The line will be introduced with a free 22-minute animated video, which comes with the Sgt. Savage figure, and tells the story of Sgt. Savage as he fights against the new enemy: the I.R.O.N. Army.

The following is Sgt. Savage's biography, telling some of the background story of this new toy line:

File Name: *Savage, Robert Steven*
Code Name: *Rip Van Winkle*
Affiliation: *U.S. Army*
Rank: *Master Sergeant*
Grade: *E-10*
Military Specialty: *Military Strategy and Combat*
SN: *Classified*
Height: *6'9"*
Weight: *315 pounds*
Birthplace: *Boston, Mass.*
Mission: *To combat evil in the pursuit of justice with his team of commandos, the Screaming Eagles.*

Sgt. Robert S. Savage is one of the bravest and most decorated officers of the U.S. Army, and his story is quite unique.

During World War II, Sgt. Savage was captured by enemy forces and literally frozen in time as part of a genetic restructuring experiment. Discovered 40 years later, in 1994, Savage was defrosted, and found to have super-human powers–he was faster, stronger, tougher, and more ready to fight for his nation.

Today, Sgt. Savage leads a talented group of commandos—the Screaming Eagles—as they combat evil in the pursuit of justice. He commands a well-earned level of respect from his team, that only someone with his experience can justify.

In his career, Savage has earned extensive accolades, including a Congressional Medal of Honor, and four Bronze Stars for bravery. He is the true American Hero—the ultimate in dignity and integrity.

Outside the Army, Savage is an avid basketball player and recreational boxer; he is a tough match in virtually any physical activity.

As you can see, the basic idea of G.I. Joe is still there, but with a slightly different twist. Expect to see this line show up sometime in 1995.

Hot Christmas Toys

As Christmas '94 draws near, toy and department stores are beginning to release

PHOTO COURTESY OF HASBRO

Sgt. Savage assorted figures. From left to right, front row: D-Day, I.R.O.N. Stormtrooper, Cryo-Freeze Sgt. Savage, Urban Dynamite, and General Blitz. L. to r., back row: Jet-Pack Blitz, Dynamite, Commando Sgt. Savage, Jungle Camo D-Day, Arctic Stormtrooper, and Sgt. Savage.

ALL CHARACTERS SHOWN ABOVE ™ & © HASBRO. BACKGROUND ART ™ & © ECLIPSE.

their traditional wave of exclusive toys. This year, the hot item appears to be *Star Wars* Micro Machines by Galoob. The department store chain, Target, has come out with two sets featuring a mixture of starships and miniature figures. The first one is The Rebel Forces Gift Set including an X-Wing, Millennium Falcon, B-Wing, Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Princess Leia, and, available only in this set, Admiral Ackbar. The second set is The Imperial Forces Gift Set, including an Imperial Star Destroyer, TIE Fighter, AT-AT, AT-ST, Darth Vader, Boba Fett, Stormtrooper, and, available only in this set, the Emperor.

Over at Kmart, you can find the numbered limited edition Galaxy Battle Set. This set includes an X-Wing, Millennium Falcon, Y-Wing, Imperial Star Destroyer, TIE Fighter, and—exclusive to this set—Darth Vader's TIE Fighter. Figures in the set are Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Darth Vader, Stormtrooper, and exclusive figures of a Rebel Pilot and a TIE Fighter Pilot.

One set out there appears to be exclusive to Toys R' Us, but this is unconfirmed at this time. The set is made up of 19 ships, including an A-Wing, B-Wing, X-Wing, Y-Wing, Speeder Bike with pilot, Jawa Sandcrawler, Bespin Twin Pod Cloud Car, Millennium Falcon, TIE Fighter, TIE Bomber, Rebel Blockade Runner, Snowspeeder, Imperial Shuttle, Imperial Star Destroyer, Jabba's Sail Barge, AT-AT, AT-ST, Slave-I, and, exclusively, Darth Vader's Star Destroyer: The Executor. So far, this set has only been spotted at Toys R' Us. We will keep you informed if this changes.

Another exclusive item over at Toys R' Us is a previously unannounced boxed set of *Star Trek* figures by Playmates. The Command Set includes the commanding officers and their first officers from each generation of the show: Commander Sisko, Major Kira, Captain Kirk in dress uniform, Mr. Spock in dress uniform, Captain Picard in dress uniform, and Commander Riker in dress uniform.

The odd part about this exclusive is that some sets have shown up with numbered gold stickers in the bottom right corner, while others have not. The official statement from Playmates on this matter is that only the first 10,000 units produced were numbered. There is no word on how many of the unnumbered sets were manufactured, but this should not diminish the value of the numbered sets.

And speaking of exclusives at Toys R' Us, don't miss Wizard Press's *How to Collect Comics* special edition, in which collectors can learn more about collecting comics, and non-collectors can be introduced to the fun of collecting comics (and toys!). Check it out.

Some mail has come in asking what the Kenner mail-in Predator looks like. It's a clear plastic version of the Predator that comes in the Aliens vs. Predator twin pack. The mail-in comes with a silver plastic mask, arm weapons, and a black, snap-on chest plate. There has been no word as of yet regarding whether or not this figure will ever be available in retail stores, but historically, all Kenner mail-in figures have eventually shown up as retail items.

Before I go, don't forget to check out the photo of all those neato WildC.A.T.s figures from Playmates!

Next month marks the triumphant return of the toy price guide (and it's about time!). Some of the featured toy lines in this installment will be *Star Wars*, Super Powers, Secret Wars, and many, many more. Until then, see you in aisle 7C.

Sean Aune is a freelance writer and owner of Splash Page Comics and Toys, a store in Kirksville, Mo.

Photo courtesy of WildStorm Productions

WildC.A.T.s figures are here! Clockwise from upper left: Maul, WarBlade, Helspont, Spartan, and Zealot.

"Hey, I can't see squat!" This clear, plastic version of a Predator will probably find its way into retail stores soon.

Hey! Don't forget to check out *How to Collect Comics* from Wizard Press.

WildC.A.T.s ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions. Predator ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox. Wolverine ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

HOMEMADE HEROES

The two Third Prize winners this month will receive a limited edition *Rune* #0, an *X-O Manowar* #0 signed by Joe Quesada, and a Gold *WildStar* #1 signed by Jerry Ordway. The two Second Prize winners will receive a *Marvels* #0 signed by Alex Ross, a *Hulk* #420 signed by Peter David, a *Turok* #1 signed by Bart Sears, and a Dark Horse soft-vinyl King Kong model kit. The Grand Prize winner will receive a Platinum *Predator vs. Magnus* #1, a Platinum *RoboCop vs. Terminator* #1, an *Amazing Spider-Man* #375 signed by Mark Bagley, and a Dark Horse soft-vinyl King Kong model kit.

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send your entries to: Figure of the Month Contest, c/o Toying Around, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. (No Polaroids—and make sure you focus, dammit!)

Special thanks to Dark Horse for donating the model kits. You guys are cooler than a dark and brooding art student, even with a goatee!

Hellboy ™ & © Mike Mignola

Grand Prize Winner

"Ugh...uh...oh, man, am I chafed."
Hellboy
Hey, it's Mike Mignola's bestest pal, Hellboy! Crafted by Chris Spaseff of Tempe, Ariz., we have absolutely no idea what the hell he's made of. Our guess? Actual human body parts. (And all of Chris's neighbors thought he was such a good kid.)

Second Prize Winner

Death and Matthew the Raven ™ & © DC Comics

That there is one powerful do.
Death & Matthew the Raven
Straight from The Endless comes Death and Matthew the Raven, crafted from something, but Joshua D. Rasmussen of Wauwatosa, Wis. ain't sayin' what. (Death musta been a Barbie or somethin', but we don't have a clue where the bird came from.)

Second Prize Winner

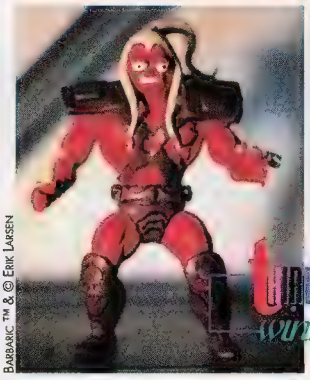
Human Torch ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

"I said Bud Light™!"
Human Torch
When crafting your homemade hero entry, remember what Matt Bussey and Jason Cunniff of Olympia, Wash. always say: "Gimme a match." Yes sir, safety first. (We truly don't recommend this type of action, readers.) Anyway, that blazing figure up there used to be a Toy Biz G.W. Bridge. (Good choice. If we had to set fire to a Toy Biz figure, he'd definitely make the top three on our list.)

Third Prize Winner

The Crow ™ & © James O'Barr

"I've come back for you, T-Bird, and now you'll fee...aw, not on my arm, you stupid bird!"
The Crow
Rising from the grave (and from a Kenner Dick Grayson body, a sanded-down Toy Biz Omega Red head, and a crow from Kenner's Batman: T.A.S. Scarecrow figure), we're treated to a top-notch Crow, courtesy of David Acuna of Lennox, Calif.



Barbaric ™ & © Erik Larsen

Third Prize Winner

"Ya know, wit da right dress on, I could play a sunboyned Heidi."
Barbaric
Looking like he just got hit in the head with a rolling pin, Barbaric sees print courtesy of Andy Kurth of Clio, Mich. Making good use of one of them lousy Mattel He-Man figures and a wad of clay, Andy brought this Freak Force member to toy-life.

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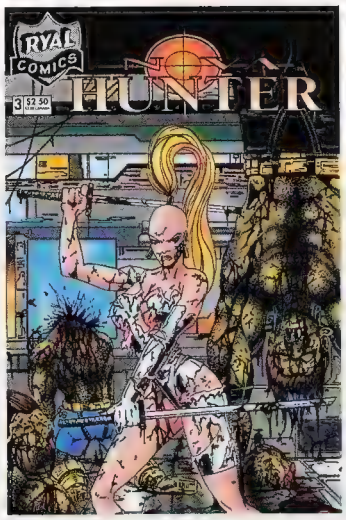

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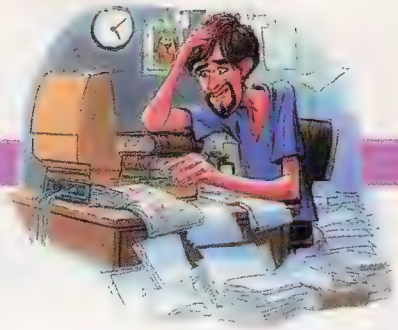

The World According to Pope

What do you get when you combine a 13-year-old girl, her inflatable purple bodyguard, an anthropomorphic Steinway piano, and an army of bug-eyed bureaucrats (among other things)? You can find the answer in *THB*, a serialized "drawn novel" created and published by Ohio-based comic artist Paul Pope that promises to be one of the most bizarre and entertaining comics of the year.

First and foremost, *THB* tells the story of a child, as seen through the eyes of H.R. Watson, a young schoolgirl on Mars sometime in the future. The diverse, whimsical characters in the story reflect a child's fertile imagination. The action and pace of the comic play out with a healthy dose of "cartoon logic." Pope describes this as something "a cartoonist needs to understand. All skunks stink. Seasick people turn green, angry people red. If an anvil falls on your head, you crack up into a million pieces."

Pope draws a definite line between the imaginative world the children perceive and the "real" world populated by adults. In some scenes featuring adults, for example, the angle of perspective shifts to show that they are merely on a stage set with lights, a catwalk, and sandbags.

"When I start drawing, I'm real spontaneous about it. I'm tapped into a creativity I can just trust," explains Pope. And he has every reason to trust his instincts. In the short span of a few years, he has become one of the most talked-about artists in the industry, earning praise from an impressive group of creators, including Will Eisner, Dave McKean, and Robert Kanigher.

Pope probably earned most of the buzz simply because he is a unique creator in this current age of young cookie-cutter artists who cite Jim Lee or Todd McFarlane as a major influence on their work. The twenty-four-year-old artist says that he draws inspiration from such renowned masters of the art form as Alex Toth, Jack Kirby, and Hugo Pratt. His work is fresh and exciting due not only to the fact that it has firm roots in classic comics, but because he also draws influence from "legitimate" art and literature (yes, readers, there is more to life than comic books).

Pope's inspiration from philosophy, art, and literature is evident in his first two graphic novels, *Sin Titulo* (which means "untitled" in Spanish) and *The Ballad of Doctor Richardson*. The protagonist of *Sin Titulo* travels to Mexico in search of evidence to back his claim that American author Ambrose Bierce was a Marxist. *The Ballad of Doctor Richardson* (an "answer" to T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock") is a romantic work that recounts 12 hours in the life of an unsuccessful college professor who changes his fate by holding onto a fleeting moment with a woman on a subway. Both works have realistic plots, but are set in the near future, bringing a small science fiction twist to the narrative. The fantasy elements in these books, however, are downplayed in favor of a story grounded in character interactions.

While *Sin Titulo* and *The Ballad of Doctor Richardson* are sprinkled with fantasy, *THB* is smothered in it. But just because *THB* is full of cartoon characters and whimsical sights, doesn't mean that it has no story or meaning. Pope is being unusually tight-lipped about the specifics of the plot, but rest assured that *THB*, as he notes, "is not going to alienate the kind of people who have liked *Doctor Richardson*, but it's also not going to be a work that's a sell-out."

With *THB*, Pope has created an imaginative world populated by a strange cast of characters. In fact, he has created so many characters that he won't have room for all of them in one series. After the completion of the initial six-issue *THB* story, Pope will publish *Kirby Kansas*, "a comic book read by people on Mars," and *Heavy Liquid*, a series with a darker, more "surreal and relentless" tone than the rest of the *THB* material, something which Pope has been asked to prepare for several major companies.

Paul Pope's characters move with a sense of life and vibrancy that fits perfectly with his free, intuitive style of brushwork.

H.R. Watson, her inflatable bodyguard, and her robot chef (right to left) all live on Mars.

Above: Foil, one of the villains featured in *THB*. Top right: H.R.'s bodyguard is ready to rumble.

Pope has not yet amassed a large body of work. He had a few strips published in a couple of small press magazines before he established Horse Press to publish his own work, using information he gathered on how to start a small business. Unlike many self-publishers, Pope takes an active part in aggressively promoting his work. He enjoys thinking up new ways to involve the reader, such as trading cards, postcards, and posters that help flesh out the story and make reading each comic a three-dimensional experience.

By the way, *THB* stands for a peculiar word Pope himself created: Tri-Hydro-Bioxygenate, which is supposedly a ball that explodes into a little person with the addition of just a few drops of water (kind of like a cross between a genie and a Sea-Monkey).

Just as fascinating as the buzz around *THB* is Paul Pope himself. An intensely ambitious and uniquely gifted creator, Pope should have a very bright future ahead. Let's face it—with all of the good word surrounding his work, it's going to be impossible not to notice Paul Pope in the next year.

If you'd like to respond to anything I've written lately, you can drop me a line at Palmer's Picks, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

PICKS OF THE MONTH

Boom Boom #2—Rising star David Lasky uses the legendary Jack Kirby's style to tell the story of the difficulties encountered by author James Joyce while writing his novel *Ulysses*. David's first issue was a top-notch debut, and this issue promises to surpass it. If you can't find a copy locally, send $3.25 to Mu Press 5014-D Roosevelt Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105.

From Hell: The Compleat Scripts—If you have read *From Hell* (Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's horrifying dissection of the Jack the Ripper murders) in comic book form from Kitchen Sink Press, you are only getting half the experience. *From Hell: The Compleat Scripts* from Borderlands Press presents Alan Moore's original script for the comic. In some ways, this book is even more precise and satisfying than the comic, since it relates subtle gestures and motivations for characters that are impossible to convey in a comic. This is a unique book, the first to spotlight a comic writer's full script, and it is a valuable insight into the creative process. If your local comic store can't find a copy for you, you can get in touch with Borderlands Press at P.O. Box 146, Brooklandville, MD 21022 (or 1-800-528-3310 for Visa/Master Card orders). Book one of the four-volume *From Hell: The Compleat Scripts* is available now in a limited-edition, signed, numbered, and slipcased hardcover for $95, as well as a softcover version for $14.95.

Tom Palmer Jr. is a freelance writer from New Jersey who can boogie till the cows come home.

Paul Pope's Recommended Reading: Here's a rundown of some comics (new and old) that Paul Pope goes crazy for: *Cages* by Dave McKean; *Nexus* by Mike Baron and Steve Rude; *Strangers in Paradise* by Terry Moore; *Rubber Blanket* by David Mazzuchelli and others; *Corto Maltese* and other works by Hugo Pratt; *Little Ego* and other works by Vittorio Giardino; *Tyrant* by Steve Bissette; and *Optic Nerve* by Adrian Tomine.

Tom's Recommended Reading

THB: The second issue of this six-issue black-and-white series is out now, so run down to your local comic shop and demand a copy. The series starts with a 96-page first issue, followed by four 48-page issues, and concludes with a 64-page issue. Every issue also includes extras like posters, trading cards, stickers, stamps, maps, and more. If you'd like information on subscriptions and back issues, you can contact Horse Press at P.O. Box 3112, Columbus, OH 43210. Horse Press also has copies of Pope's first two graphic novels, the 80-page *Sin Titulo*, and the 112-page *The Ballad of Doctor Richardson*, at a cost of $9.95 each, as well as an assortment of posters, trading cards, and postcards by Pope. Paul Pope's work can also be found in *Negative Burn* #12 and #13, and on a regular basis, beginning with issue #15 (including self-contained stories and a preview of *Kirby Kansas*). He also has an eight-page story in the upcoming *Dark Horse Presents* #100, and "The Dragonfly," an eleven-part serial based on early American aviation beginning in *Dark Horse Presents* #101. Sometime in the next year or two, Pope also plans to start *Prelude to Icarus*, which he describes as "a false autobiography."

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COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

It's time once again to test all that worthless comic book knowledge you've accumulated in that noggin of yours when you should've been out pulling legs off of daddy longlegs. What follows are 25 of the hardest questions ever slapped together by a band of scabby fanboys.

This month, we're grading your comic knowledge against the kind of stuff the Stormtroopers would say about Darth Vader, but only when they're out of the Dark Lord's earshot. The higher your score, the more dangerous the remark, and the bigger the fanboy or fangirl you are!

score	rank
0-5	"Did you see that? He's got a peepee latch!"
6-12	"There goes Vader. You know what they say about guys with big helmets. Trying to compensate for something."
13-19	"Y'know, Khan is a *much* cooler bad guy."
20-24	"What an ass!"
25	Nothing. In case you didn't see any of the *Star Wars* flicks, Darth gives people the finger of death just for lookin' at him funny. So keep your mouth shut and go shoot an Ewok or somethin'.

1. When Spider-Man first battled Venom, he wore a costume with these colors:
A) Red and blue.
B) Black and white.
C) Plaid and plaid.
D) None (the boy was buck-nekkid).

2. Which of the following characters has never been vampire-ish?
A) Storm
B) Looker
C) Baron Blood
D) Sabretooth

3. Who was the first supervillain that Batman ever faced?
A) Two-Face
B) Joker
C) Catwoman
D) Man-Bat

4. Which Avenger ended up married to an alien plant-creature?
A) Mantis
B) Jocasta
C) The Vision
D) She-Hulk

5. Which of the following characters was a member of Team 7?
A) Boone
B) Backlash
C) Troll
D) Dreadknight

6. The title *Avengers Spotlight* was originally titled:
A) *The Avenger.*
B) *Solo Avengers.*
C) *Tales of the Avengers.*
D) *Avoid This Crap.*

7. How did Eddie Brock meet Cletus Kasady?
A) During a group therapy session.
B) Cletus was robbing Eddie's apartment and Eddie caught him.
C) They shared a prison cell.
D) Partying at the Blue Oyster Bar.

8. Zenn-La was the homeworld of:
A) The Silver Surfer.
B) The New Gods.
C) Galactus.
D) The Celestials.

9. Apocalypse didn't have a hand in the powering-up of what character?
A) Caliban
B) Moses Magnum
C) Archangel
D) The Mimic

10. The *Post*-Crisis Wonder Woman has done all of the following, except:
A) Freed enslaved women on a planet in outer space.
B) Destroyed her home island of Themyscira in a furious rage.
C) Acted as a midwife.
D) Worked at Taco Whiz.

11. Which of the following characters is/was not a costumed vigilante who goes around killing people?
A) Foolkiller

B) Solo
C) Mad Dog
D) Madcap

12. What phrase would a nervous desperado almost invariably challenge the Rawhide kid with?
A) "Excuse me sir, I'm a nervous desperado, would you like a gunfight?"
B) "Slap leather, ya jasper!"
C) "My dad can beat up your dad!"
D) "Less filling, hot dammit, less filling!"

13. Wanda Simmons, Spawn's widow, has how many children?
A) One
B) Two
C) Three
D) Ten (and she's never walked again)

14. The Beyonder once had a relationship with which ex-X-Man?
A) Revanche
B) Dazzler
C) Phoenix
D) Kitty Pryde (back when he was known as the Beyonder Lee Lewis)

15. Superman's new foe Conduit is really his old schoolmate:
A) Kenny Biderman.
B) Kenny Braverman.
C) Kenny Ross.
D) Kenny Kenny Rough-n-ready.

16. What novel does Fone Bone keep with him?
A) *Moby Dick*
B) *Tom Sawyer*
C) *Of Mice and Men*
D) We're not sure of the title, but something with a big sweaty picture of Fabio on the cover.

17. Which of the following characters was not an *Iron Man* supporting cast member?
A) Perky Penny
B) Bubbly Bonnie
C) Happy Hogan
D) All of the above

18. Who killed Kyle Rayner's girlfriend?
A) Major Force
B) Mongul
C) Hal Jordan
D) Zero Hour

19. Sunspot quit the New Mutants in what issue of their series?
A) #97
B) #98
C) #99
D) #100

20. As a mascot, Cyberforce has what type of little critter hanging around?
A) A cat
B) A dog
C) A parrot
D) Bubbles, Michael Jackson's chimp (after everything he's been readin' about the Gloved One, that's one scared monkey!)

21. Which of these Legionnaire couples did not exist?
A) Jan Arrah and Shvaughn Erin
B) Jo Nah and Tinya Wazzo
C) Brin Londo and Tasmia Mallor
D) Chuck Taine and Luornu Durgo

22. During "Knightfall," Batman was trapped with which police officer in a girl's school under siege by Zsasz?
A) Bullock
B) Montoya
C) Gordon
D) Rosco P. Coltrane

23. When Galactus first showed up on Earth, he was wearing:
A) A short-sleeve shirt.
B) A lei.
C) Sandals.
D) Nothing but a smile (now *that* was something to write home about).

24. Which of these heroines did not take a leadership position in a Justice League team?
A) Black Canary
B) Wonder Woman
C) Fire
D) Dr. Light

25. Which of the following Marvel characters has the most titles based on that particular character?
A) Spider-Man
B) Punisher
C) Ghost Rider
D) X (Now, we know there's no one Marvel character called X, but with *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Men Adventures*, *X-Men Unlimited*, *X-Men Classic*, *X-Men 2099*, *X-Force*, *X-Factor*, and *Generation X*, we thought we could getcha on this one.) ☆

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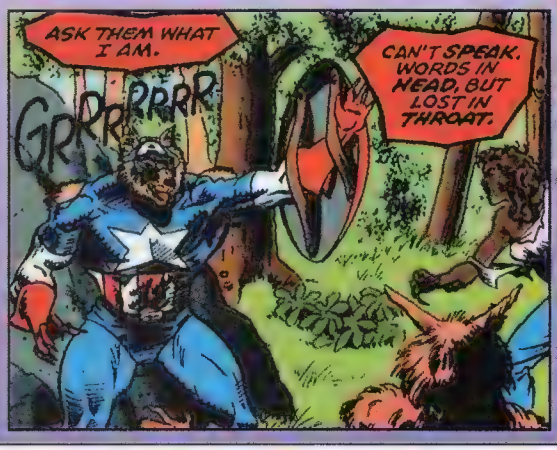
stupid but TRUE...

It's truly a sad day in comic land when Captain America, the Living Legend of World War II, and just all-around great guy, makes an appearance here. A couple of years back, in the "Man and Wolf" storyline from *Captain America* #402-#407, Cap raced off in search of his missing pilot, John Jameson. It turned out that Jameson was captured by a bunch of lame villains who were turning all their prisoners into mind-controlled werewolves. When Cap was caught and injected with the wolf serum, he became...Capwolf! More like Crapwolf, if you ask us. The man is a hero, a legend, a God even. You just don't mess with things like that. Anyway, due to his superior stamina and the Super Soldier Serum in his blood, Cap's mind was free to think "Woods...run free...need to run..." and "Can't speak. Words in head, but lost in throat." These sound more like ancient Chinese proverbs, don't they? Guest appearances by Wolverine and Cable (*Cable*? What the heck's this guy doing in a book with Cap and werewolves? That's just plain ludicrous!) made this story even dumber than it already was. Give this one some silver bullets and put it to rest.



Captain America ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

A	N	S	W	E	R	S
1. B	2. D	3. C	4. A	5. B	6. B	7. C
10. B	11. D	12. B	13. A	14. B	15. B	16. A
	19. C	20. A	21. C	22. B	23. A	24. C

the WIZARD OF CARDS

By Stephen Shamus

Topps is producing a first for *Star Wars* cards, with December's Star Wars Widevision set. Each extra-long, 2.5-by-4.75 inch card (like the Sandman cards) will feature full-frame photo images, just like you saw 'em in the theatre, plus holographic stamping, and UV coating on both sides. All of the film's major plot points, along with sev-

Return of the Jedi!

eral special effects and optical effects shots, are featured on these super premium wide cards. Using the new Widevision technical process, each of the 120 beautiful shots was taken directly from the original film master, making for some incredible-looking cards. On top of all that, the chase cards are Topps Finest super murals, all painted by the well-known *Star Wars* production illustrator Ralph McQuarrie. Each pack of eight cards will only run you wild *Star Wars* fans $1.89.

DC, the longest-running comics publisher in history, is now in the trading cards business. The Vertigo Tarot Card & Book set, featuring the characters from the Vertigo titles, is on its way in early January. This 78-card Tarot set provides the complete Tarot spectrum and comes with a guidebook that has been written by Tarot expert and *Doom Patrol* scribe Rachel Pollack. The 116-page hardcover guidebook and set has a suggested retail of $50. Vertigo fans have already proven their interest in any and all Vertigo products with the smashing success of SkyBox's Sandman trading cards from earlier this year. This offering should do just as well, if not better.

SkyBox has some great new sets on the horizon, slated for a November release. It based one set on Macaulay Culkin's new movie, *The Pagemaster*, which combines live action with animation. This 90-card series contains eight cards in every 99-cent pack. Chase cards have yet to be determined, but they'll surely be in there.

The Lion King broke all kinds of records for Disney, and it did the same for SkyBox movie sets. A second series adapting this mondo-popular animation flick is hitting the shelves in November. It's an 80-card series using all-new animation not shown in the variations or chase cards from the first series (both the regular and tin versions). This set is a continuation of the first series, and therefore the numbering will start at 81 and end at 160. Various chase cards will be made with a process called Thermography, meaning the ink is raised from the card. There are also five Pop-ups (which will also continue the numbering from the first series—P6 through P10) and two Art cards, which will be foil-enhanced. The amount of chase cards per box is not yet available. Within the 80-card set are a number of subsets, including Animal Info, Rafiki's Words of Wisdom, and the Art of *The Lion King*. Eight-card packs will cost 99 cents each.

Disney has also granted SkyBox the rights to produce trading cards exclusively for Disney's Saturday morning cartoon, *Gargoyles*. These cards are scheduled for a February release. SkyBox will also be producing cards for Disney's big animated film for '95, *Pocohontas*.

All you Mortal Kombat players out there will be glad to hear that Classic Games is producing an all-new series of cards based on the blockbuster game spotlighting *Mortal Kombat II*. For $1.00, you get eight action-packed cards. This is an 80-card series composed of all the regular Kombat fighters, as well as some new ones like Jade, Smoke, and Noob Saibot. There are also a whopping seven chase sets, totaling 86 cards, and ranging from Finishing Moves to Friendship Moves. And of course, don't forget that eight-card Spike set.

Popeye, the cartoon for all ages, is going to appear on trading cards in mid-December from the Brian Wallos Company. This 100-card set chronicles the birth and evolution of Popeye from the cartoon strip to his introduction to cartoonland on *Betty Boop*, and all the way to the character we know and love today. Subsets include a 25-card character history set, 25 comic strip cards, and 30 cartoon cards. The case run is 1,929—a number that comes from the year Popeye was first seen in comic strip form. There is also a three-tier chase program: 12 foil character cards found one per nine packs, eight Evolution chromium cards found one per 36 packs, and four Popeye Power Cells made with embossed foil—like SkyBox's Man of Steel set—found one per 360 packs. Six-card packs should set you back about 99 cents a pop.

A Monty Python set chronicling the funniest moments in the history of the British comedy series is slated for a mid-November release. There are no subsets, just good clean fun. Four chase cards will appear, however, and most likely will be of the lenticular variety (which is similar to the Simpsons wiggle card, on which two different images appear, depending on how you turn the card). Packs contain ten cards each and have a suggested retail between $1.00 and $1.25 per pack.

Comic Images has Bill Ward: 50 Fabulous Years of Torchy scheduled for an early December release, and it's the final Comic Images set of the

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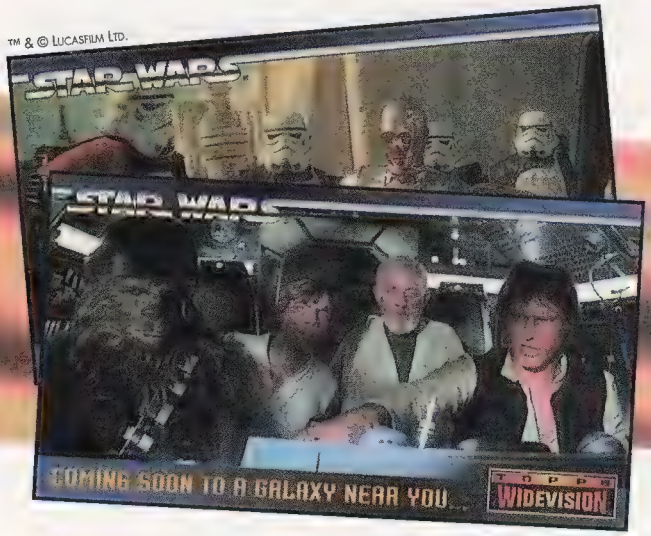

"That's no moon..." Of course not silly, its the Widevision *Star Wars* cards from Topps.

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SkyBox presents *The Pagemaster* trading cards, featuring characters from the animated flick starring Macaulay Culkin.

year. This set celebrates the artistry of Bill Ward and his "Good Girl" character Torchy, the blonde bombshell he created to boost the morale of World War II soldiers. Chase cards include six OmniChrome cards found three per box; one Ward autographed card found one per two cases (500 in total); one serially numbered Medallion card found four per case (4,000 in total); one uncut six-card strip of artwork not found in the regular set, at one per case; and a three-card chase set of airbrush art (as opposed to charcoal) found one card per box. Ten-card packs will probably sell for around 99 cents, which has been the case with most C.I. products this year.

A couple of movie sets released this past summer have seen significant action, even though the movies are long gone from the theaters. This may have to do with the fact that the films are now available on home video, stirring up a whole new batch of interest. Topps' *The Shadow*, the semi-bomb of a movie starring Alec Baldwin, has been selling well at its $1.00 suggested retail, while the four-card Dark Horse chase set is selling for $40 a set. *The Crow*, which starred the late Brandon Lee, has garnered a cult following similar to *Dracula*. Unopened boxes are now selling for over $40 each, so you can expect to pay $1.50 per pack. Kitchen Sink was the producer of this set, which, at 100 cards, goes for about $18 now. This is a very odd turn of events, since movie sets have generally not fared well due to the brief time window in which a movie is in the theater. *Jurassic Park* and *Total Recall are two* good examples of big movies with card sets that bombed.

Some movies, like the Disney ones, more closely resemble an art form, which is a reason that almost all Disney animated movies have been huge hits in the card markets. Movies like *The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin,* and especially *The Lion King*, have all had successful movie card sets, with the last being the biggest of them all. Look for more of the same when future Disney animated movies come out.

Fleer's Marvel Universe set, as expected, has been a huge hit since day one. Here's a formula for success. Step 1: Take Spider-Man and put him on a 2 1/2-by-3 1/2 inch piece of cardboard. Step 2: Throw some foil-stamping on that bugger. Step 3: Wrap it up and sell a friggin' million cases. Any questions?

The WildStorm all-chromium cards from WildStorm Productions have performed consistently well in the secondary market. At first, the $3 suggested retail price per pack may have seemed a little intimidating, but for now, anyway, price points such as this one might become more and more commonplace (Flair Marvel was $4, and the new SkyBox Platinum Superman series is $3). Once people saw that collation was good (usually one full set per box) and that they could actually find an authentically signed card, packs were flying. Series 2 will be out shortly, and should include many of the same features that made series 1 so great.

Speaking of Fleer Flair Marvel, both the collecting and retail worlds are eagerly awaiting February's release of the second Flair set featuring the popular array of Marvel's characters. So much has happened in Marvel's books this past year, and this set will detail it all with—once again—computer-generated art. We have early images to show you this month, and will definitely keep you posted on any information we get about this sure-to-be-hot set.

Stephen Shamus is the co-publisher of Collector's Sportslook. *We've been trying to ditch this guy for 40 issues now, but his older brother won't let us.*

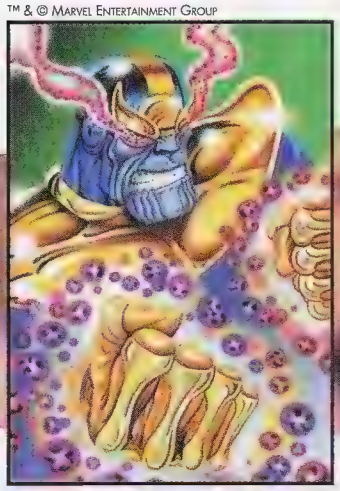
™ & © Python (Monty) Pictures Ltd.

"No one expects a chase set!" *Monty Python* cards are on the way.

™ & © Disney

"Hey dad, can I mark 'em with my scent?" SkyBox's *The Lion King* II trading cards.

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group



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Brace yourself: Fleer Flair Marvel '95. Left to right: Thanos, Skin, and Sabretooth.

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TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

This list ... any kind of sales met... ...thing less.

We're taking this month off from the usual hot heroes and villains listings to bring you the 10 coolest-lookin' spooky comic characters. (*You* try writing different stuff about the same ten characters for a year. Ugh!)

1. VENOM

Mmmm. looks like Venom here just spotted a Gary Coleman-kabob (Now *that's* good eatin'!) Though he's a mite played-out these days, Venom was easily the coolest-lookin' fella in comics, back when McFarlane was drawin' him. No stupid long tongue, no phlegm-like green spit, no stupid overdone eyes, just a cool-looking spooky character that quickly became THE Spider-Man villain. Part human and part alien symbiote, Venom was once reporter Eddie Brock. When he lost his job due to his shoddy reporting skills (he blamed Spidey, of course), Eddie bonded with the symbiote which had recently been defeated by Spider-Man. Together, they were the sweetest couple since Mickey & Mallory.

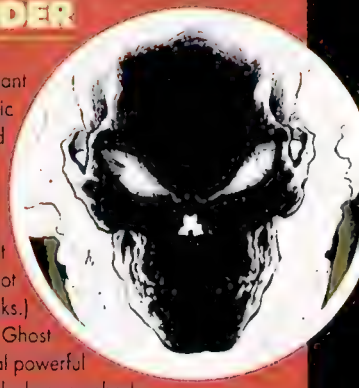
2. HELSPONT

"Don't let my cotton candy head fool you. I'm evil! EVIL!!" Hey, settle down, buddy, or we'll turn the hose on you, ya maniac. Sheesh, you let a guy know that he's one of the coolest-lookin' characters in comics and it goes straight to his cabeza. Aside from his good looks, this extraterrestrial WildC.A.T.s villain is getting even more fuel for his ego by appearing as the heavy in the new *WildC.A.T.s* cartoon, and a toy figure of ol' flame-brain is in the works, courtesy of them fellas over at Playmates. All in all, a very cool-lookin' bad guy, and even though he's dead (for now), he's one o' our favorites.

3. LORD PUMPKIN

Whoa, looks like Lord Pumps here just chowed down on some grub from a sidewalk vendor somewhere south of the border. (If you're curious to see what he ate, just stick around for a couple of minutes. One way or another, we're bound to find out.) Anyway, Lord Pumpkin, who was once a kind and gentle soul created to be a playmate for a spoiled young prince, was tormented by the prince until Pumpsy snapped, killing his charge, his family, and anybody else that got in his way. So, instead of pursuing a career as a guest on the talk show circuit ("Evil pumpkin-headed golems and the women who love them, on the next *Oprah!*"), Pumpsy became one o' them supervillain types. We like him better this way.

4. GHOST RIDER



It just dawned on us. If you want to make a cool-looking comic book character, just set his head on fire. (Don't try this in real life, though. Mark Maas, who entered as Ghost Rider in our Halloween costume contest, lit his head on fire, and all he got was a bunch of crappy books.) The whole story behind this Ghost Rider fella is that he's a reeeal powerful spirit bonded to a human, and when somebody does a rudeness to an innocent, BAM, G.R. shows up and somebody gets their clock cleaned. (With that level of angst and hostility, ol' G.R. musta been an art student or something in a previous life.)

Venom & Ghost Rider ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.
Helspont ™ & © Aegis Entertainment DBA WildStorm Productions. Lord Pumpkin ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc.

5. ALIEN

Somebody get this guy some Tartar Control Crest™ and a good toothbrush. Eeeyuk, that's about three pounds of plaque on this critter. Aside from his teeth (Actually, I don't think "his" is appropriate here. Aliens, aside from the queen, are like drone bees, which makes them asexual. That's gotta suck.)—anyway, aside from *its* teeth, Aliens are easily the coolest-looking movie monsters, and one of the all-time coolest groups of creepy-crawlers ever created (Talk about yer alliteration!). With their inhuman strength, tough exo-skeletons, super-keen double-snapping jaws, spiked tails, and acid blood that can eat through anything, these li'l buggers are definitely the best there is at what they do. (Sorry, Wolvie.)

6. PREDATOR

"I'm not only the President, I'm also a client," says the founder of the Hair Club for Stubbly-Headed-Crab-Faced-Dreadlock-Wearin'-Fishy-Smellin'-Alien-Humanoid-Ass-Kickers. Well, aside from having cabezas muy prickly, these fellas win hands down for meanest monsters ever. Aside from not being too easy on the eyes, these guys hail from a race of warriors, and when they're not out f-ghtin', they're huntin'. And when they go huntin', they go huntin' for the likes of Aliens, humans, Schwarzeneggers, and just whatever's big, and puts up a real fight. Now if we can only convince them studio weasels to do an Aliens vs. Predator flick...

7. DEADMAN

Hey, that Weight Watchers™ stuff really works. Deadman (Boston Brand to his friends) was a high-wire aerialist until he was shot during a performance by an assassin (as part of the assassin's initiation into a fun group), and Mr. Brand went splat. (Wonder if it was the same circus where Dick Grayson's parents went splat?) Anywho, upon his death, the Hindu goddess Rama Kushna brought Mr. Brand back to ghost-life to right wrongs, look out for the little guy, and do all sorts of other good stuff. With his power to possess other bodies (and the fact that he can get in movies for free and hang out in girls' locker rooms unnoticed—whoo-eee!), it's gotta be neat to be him, but it's gotta really bite being dead.

8. SPIDER ALIEN

What is this, Grizzly Adams Spider Alien? This guy's gotta have a couple of pounds of crusty soup and tuna salad stuck in his "beard." (If he ever got hungry, he could just wring his "beard" into a pot of water and make a hearty broth! Campbell's™, eat yer heart out!) Other than that vomit-inducing thought, these guys are nasty for a whole bunch of other reasons, including their plot to take over Earth, subjugate the human race (and snack on us when their tummies rumble), and pants the entire royal family (their evil knows no bounds). Good thing Solar got ticked off and blew 99% of these scum buckets to kingdom-come.

9. SLUDGE

"Achoo! Aaa-CHOO! Uchhhh...somebody get me a *big* Kleenex™." Sludge, looking like he was eatin' some rancid French Onion Soup when he sneezed, is the sloppiest entry in this month's spooky character countdown. Yeah, his looks are inspired by Swamp Thing and Man-Thing, but those two, who are all made up of salad and stuff, look a helluva lot more tasty than they do spooky. Think about it—sprinkle some Bacos™ artificially flavored bacon bits on Swamp Thing, jam a cherry tomato in his butt, coat him in blue cheese, and boom, one Vertigo appetizer coming up. Sludge, on the other hand, is just a dripping, crooked ex-cop who lives in the sewer. Not at all yummy.

10. BROOD

We already went over one sure-fire way to make a character cool: light its head on fire. If that ever fails, jam about 100 pointy teeth in his freakin' head—that'll do the job. (Just ask Venom, Carnage, the Shark—no, he doesn't count—or any of the three dozen Violator demons.) But anyway, what makes these alien critters so neat is the fact that they jam a Brood embryo into you, which consumes you when it hatches (Alien rip-off, yeah, but it's still cool), they have a spiffy tail stinger thingie, and they're smart, so they can talk good English and stuff. All things considered, a fun villain to have around, and one the Comics Code doesn't mind having gutted!

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month, or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

ULTRA THE MULTI-ALIEN

Ultra the Multi-Alien, eh? More like Jackass the Ridiculous-Alien, if you ask me. Who was dropping acid at DC when this load of horse crap was created? To make matters worse, this piece of dead weight has an origin even cheesier than the worst Roger Corman flick. Check this out: Space pilot Ace Arn was piloting a tourist space cruise when the ship was caught in the magnetic field of a comet, and while he helped evacuate the rest of the ship, he couldn't escape in time. After awakening in a cavern of an asteroid, Ace was attacked by four funky-fresh aliens, each brandishing a gun that would turn the victim into a duplicate of the individual firing the gun. Being hit by all four beams at once turned our guy Ace into the four-part Ultra, who, after defeating the aliens and returning to Earth, became a superhero. Wanna be a *real* hero, Ace? Go drive a nail into your forehead and jump in front of a bus. Now *that* would be a good deed.

Alien & Predator ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox. Spider Alien ™ & © Voyager Communications Inc.
Deadman & Ultra ™ & © DC Comics. Sludge ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc. Brood ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

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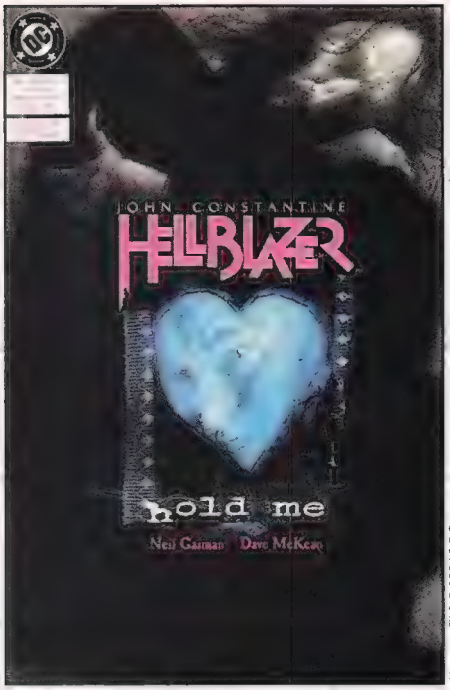

HELLBLAZER™ & © 1994 DC COMICS

Hellblazer #27

Artist: ***Dave McKean***
Writer: ***Neil Gaiman***
Publisher: ***DC Comics***
Release date: ***March 1990***

Hellblazer #27. Not your standard Comic Watch material, but not your standard comic book, either. Y'see, a fella by the name of Neil Gaiman wrote the self-contained story in this issue, titled "Hold Me," and as stories written by Mr. Gaiman tend to do, this one really cooks. The story deals with the homeless problem, and spotlights Jacko, a homeless man trying to find shelter from not just the coldness outside, but from society's cold feelings leveled against him. A really excellent story, one well worth chasing down and snaggin'...if you can find a copy. Y'see, print runs on *Hellblazer* have never been sky-high, and with this particular issue being hunted down by Gaiman fans everywhere, odds are they're just gonna get scarcer and scarcer. If you start now, you should be able to find this ish in some dusty back issue bin before the rest of the free world catches on.

Value then: $18.00
Value now: $15.00
(Oopsie poo-poo)

One year ago this month, the *Wizard* Comic Watch spotlighted *Eternal Warrior* #4, the first appearance of Bloodshot.

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DARK HORSE PRESENTS™ & © 1994 DARK HORSE COMICS

Dark Horse Presents #54

Artists: ***A whole bunch of people, including John Byrne***
Writers: ***Also a whole bunch of people, including John Byrne again***
Publisher: ***Dark Horse Comics***
Release date: ***September 1991***

If it wasn't Halloween, we'd say something weird was definitely going on around here. First we have one of them kooky Vertigo titles (actually, a pre-Vertigo issue of a Vertigo title) hovering around the Comic Watch, and now we have an issue of *Dark Horse Presents* rearing its low-printed head. Anyway, what we've actually got here is the first appearance of John Byrne's Next Men. After leaving his creative mark on such titles as *Uncanny X-Men*, *Superman*, *Fantastic Four*, and *Namor*, Mr. Byrne went the creator-owned route with *John Byrne's Next Men*, an ongoing series featuring a band of reluctant heroes from an artificial world who are trying to survive in our world. It all started right here in glorious black-and-white. And for some extra bang for your buck, there's also an installment of Frank Miller's "Sin City" in this very issue, starring Marv—if you think Superman, the Punisher, Lobo, or any of those guys are tough, Marv eats saps like them for breakfast. ☆

Value then: $9.00
Value now: $15.00

One year ago this month, the *Wizard* Comic Watch spotlighted *Saga of the Swamp Thing* #37, the first appearance of the mysterious John Constantine, of *Hellblazer* fame.

TM & © DC COMICS

PICKS
FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS SHIPPING IN NOVEMBER!

Sin City: The Big Fat Kill #1

Artist: ***Frank Miller***
Writer: ***Frank Miller***
Release Date: ***November***
Cover Price: ***$2.95***

Frank Miller's *Sin City* stories haven't exactly plodded along, so when he calls his new five-part tale "faster-paced," you know you'd better strap yourself in for a bumpy ride. "A lot takes place in a very short amount of time," he says. "There's not a lot of room for monologues. Things just keep happening." The key to what's happening is that the mob decides to move in on Old Town, the side streets run by the women who walk the night. But to do that, the mob has to overcome a bunch of pretty tough gals and a guy named Dwight, the star of the show. From the moment Dwight stumbles across a bunch of lowlifes menacing the women, things don't slow down. "The story takes a lot of twists and turns," Miller says. "It's a suspense story, really. Things just keep going wrong." As they do, readers will learn more about the women of Old Town, including Gail, the six-foot enforcer who's in love with Dwight, and Miho, the Japanese terror. "Gail's a real big player, because she's very important in Dwight's life," he explains. "And Miho gets a lot of play because she's too much fun to draw." Other key characters from the earlier installments of the series will be popping up during the story's run, but readers don't have to worry if they've never before visited the black-and-white world of *Sin City*. "I plan my stories so anybody can come in and pick [them] up without having to read the previous ones," Miller states. "I don't want to drop readers into the middle of a 30-issue continuity. Too much of that happens in comics today. But I do hope that the new story makes them want to go read the earlier ones."

SIN CITY: THE BIG FAT KILL™ & © FRANK MILLER

Youngblood: Year One #1

Youngblood ™ & © Rob Liefeld Inc.

Artists: ***Rob Liefeld & Danny Miki***
Writer: ***Kurt Busiek***
Release Date: ***November***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

Do you really need to know more than what's up there in big letters? If so, there's plenty more to tell, says writer Kurt Busiek. "Readers are going to find out not only how Youngblood formed, but why it happened," he says. "This story is really a Washington political novel with superhero action in it. There's lots of intrigue, politics, betrayals, and manipulations." Over the course of the four-part mini-series, which actually covers four years in the group's formation, readers will trace Youngblood's history from before the group's concept was developed, until after the members banded together as a full-fledged independent superhero team. Along the way, the creators intend to weave together threads from all the other Image studios, spicing up the action with revelations about StormWatch, Savage Dragon, Al (Spawn) Simmons, and a host of others. And, in the tradition of Busiek's acclaimed *Marvels* series, the tale will be told from the viewpoint of a bystander to the action. But unlike *Marvels*, this time the perspective will be from a highly biased person: Graves, the master manipulator. "For new readers, everything is here that will allow them to understand the team completely," Busiek says. "And for long-time readers, this will provide the final revelations they've been waiting for. When this ends, the secrets will be out."

Ash #1

Artists: ***Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti***
Writers: ***Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti***
Release Date: ***November***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

"There's not a lot to tell about *Ash*," says the unusually modest Joe Quesada about the first book with partner/inker Jimmy Palmiotti from their new company, Event Comics. "It's your basic action-oriented superhero book. We're just trying to tell more of a story than some comics do." The tale centers on Ashley Quinn, a fireman who makes a startling discovery about himself as he fights a deadly inferno. "Part of the conflict will be for Ash to retain his fireman persona and balance it against his other newly revealed side," says penciler and co-writer Quesada. The problem is that Ash doesn't know what that other side involves. "He has no control over his powers or any understanding of how they work. It's frustrating for him not to be able to use his powers when he's fighting a fire, because they seem fire-based." The book represents the creative partners' first foray into writing, in addition to performing the art chores. "We're really proud of it," Quesada says. "Overall, it's probably the best work we've done to this point." He also warns readers: "Keep your eyes open, because I like to sneak little things into the background that grow to be important later." One clue: A major player will appear in the first few pages of this issue, but that won't be apparent for many more issues.

Ash ™ & © Joe Quesada & Jimmy Palmiotti

Rogue #1

Rogue ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Artists: ***Mike Wieringo and Terry Austin***
Writer: ***Howard Mackie***
Release Date: ***November***
Cover Price: ***$2.95***

After the successful mini-series about fellow X-Man Gambit, you knew it was only a matter of time before his main squeeze Rogue demanded equal billing. And this four-part mini-series delivers the goods with a definite bang, as Rogue's first true love, Cody, finds himself in hot water. Being the first man she ever hurt with her powers, Cody has strong ties to Rogue's past, a past that readers will learn more about as the tale progresses. "The story is about loss and moving on with your life when something hasn't worked out," says editor Lisa Patrick. A key part of that revolves around Cody, who has been kidnapped by the Assassins Guild. Rogue knows it's up to her to rescue him—if she can face her own internal demons. "Cody is someone we've seen in flashbacks, but this time we'll get more than a glimpse of his relationship with Rogue," says Patrick. "Not only will we see what happened to him, but we'll see how Rogue feels about that." And, she adds, as Rogue faces her past, "Her decisions can't help but resonate into the regular [titles]." On top of that, she reveals, the fourth issue's conclusion features an incident that affects Rogue forever. "It's going to irreversibly change her," she states. "This story isn't about pin-up shots." Too bad, huh? As one of those Marvel Select titles, *Rogue* features a cardstock, foil-stamped cover, and glossy paper inside showing off some hot computer-generated color separations.

Tales of Suspense

Artist: ***Colin MacNeil***
Writer: ***James Robinson***
Release Date: ***November***
Cover Price: ***$6.95***

Tales of Suspense has a proud history at Marvel, launching Iron Man, and eventually splitting its pages with Captain America, until the star-spangled Avenger turned the book into his own with issue #100. This special issue offers an opportunity to examine these long-time heroes and their relationship from a new perspective. "Iron Man envies Captain America as the pinnacle of what man can become through physical training," explains editor Marc McLaurin. "At the same time, Cap sees himself merely as an old soldier. He views Tony Stark as the new guard who takes technology to the extreme. Cap envies Tony for relying on his brain instead of his body." Both heroes gain new insights as they battle D.A.N.T.E., a paramilitary terrorist group led by Emil Stein, an ex-Nazi from Cap's past. During that struggle, Cap must don armor to face a robotically enhanced foe, while Stark has to deactivate his armor and fight man-to-man. The heroes' rapport takes on new dimensions as their perceptions go up against reality. James (*The Golden Age, Firearm*) Robinson's story will be fully painted by Colin MacNeil, best known to American audiences for his *Conan the Barbarian* covers. It will be presented in the new Marvel Select format, featuring a cardstock cover with acetate overlay and glossy paper showcasing those awesome computer-generated color separations.

Tales of Suspense ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the grooviest titles shipping in November. Books marked by the *Wizard* Recommended Reading RRA sign promise to deliver solid, well-written stories.

AQUAMAN #5

DC COMICS Well, it's the fish guy's fifth issue already, and I'd say it's about time for a costume change, and...well, lookie here, he gets one! Aquaman finds more clues to his past, as Aqualad (Don't call him Aquaboy!) seeks out some chick he thinks is Tula, the old Aquagirl (why not Aqualass?) who died in 1986's *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. (Hmmm, let's see. Her death took place during Crisis, so was it Post-Crisis or Pre-Crisis? And since it's Pre-Zero Hour, did it ever really happen? Anyone? Bueller?) By Peter David, Jim Calafiore, and Brad Vancata. **$1.50**

BATMAN BOOKS

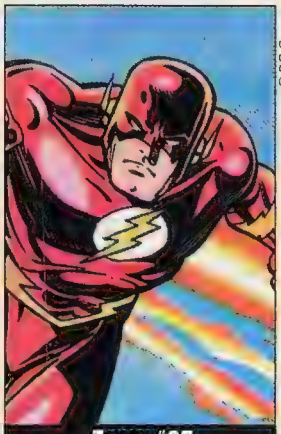
DC COMICS In *Batman* #512, the new guy inside the outfit fights a bunch o' thugs and ponders his identity. If he's not Batman, but he's not anyone else, then who is he? And does *he* understand that last sentence? Over in *Detective Comics* #681, someone matching Azrael's description is behind the murder spree infesting Gotham. *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* #67 contains part 3 of the four-part "Going Sane" storyline, where Batman finds the maniac he's looking for, but the maniac is just a little too sane! In *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #34, the Tally Man is back and he's out for revenge, but he's just too stupid to know that the guy in the Batsuit is not the one he wants dead. Silly rabbit. **$1.50—*BATMAN, DETECTIVE*; $1.95—*B: SOTB, B: LOTDK***

BATMAN: BLOODSTORM

DC COMICS Smells like Elseworlds! This sequel to *Batman: Red Rain* continues the horrifying account of Batman's vampiric state. This time, Batman must take down the Joker's bloodthirsty (literally) gang while fighting his own lust for blood. I guess you could say that this book truly bites! This bloody good 96-page hardcover is brought to you courtesy of Doug Moench, Kelley Jones, and John Beatty. (Ugh! And if we make another blood reference, drop an anvil on our heads!) **$24.95 (BANK ACCOUNT ALERT! DANGER! DANGER!)**

© DC Comics

BATMAN: BLOODSTORM



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FLASH #97

© Marvel

THE INCREDIBLE HULK #425

© Palladium Limited Partnership

THE LONE RANGER & TONTO #4

CYBERFORCE #9

IMAGE The Huntsman takes a trip to Silvestriland so he can team up with Cyberforce and partake of a jolly good adventure. And if you think this team-up will change their lives forever (like Rogue's, in her series), well, don't bet on it. I mean, it seems every comic these days says it will change its characters' lives forever. Whatta load of hooey. By Chris Claremont, Marc Silvestri, and Scott Williams. **$1.95**

EVIL ERNIE: REVENGE #2 (OF 4)

CHAOS! Evil Ernie takes on Crush (hey, unannounced WWF crossover!), but Smiley, that snazzy little button guy, is separated from our hero, and that means horrible business. Also, Lady Death's bad dreams just keep getting worse. Maybe she should get a warm and fuzzy Vermont Teddy Bear™ to sleep with; those things're soooo cute! By Brian Pulido and Steven Hughes. **$2.50**

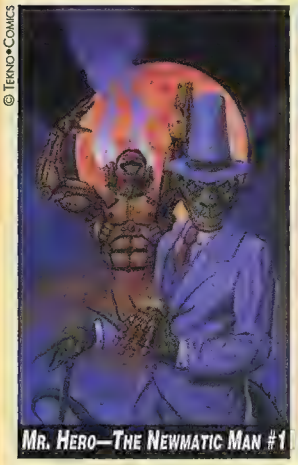
RRA FLASH #97

DC COMICS "Terminal Velocity," Part 2 (of 6). It's a speederific (speederific? Is that any relation to...Wizardrific? Ouch! Jim! Stop tha—) issue, as Wally West, Jay Garrick, Johnny Quick, and Max Mercury get Impulse ready for his new job as protector of Keystone City. Plus, you finally get to learn just who the heck that Max Mercury guy really is. (Spoiler Warning: He's naked.) By Mark Waid, Sal Larocca, and Jose Marzan Jr. Waid says of the ish, "It's the secret origin of Max Mercury, in which the readers learn facts about all the Flashes throughout history that they never knew before. Also in this issue, Flash chooses his successor, and it's not necessarily who we've led you to believe it's going to be." **$1.50**

RRA GREEN LANTERN #58

DC COMICS Darkstar and Mother of the Year Donna Troy guest-star just in time to help the green guy set up his home base in New York City. But wouldn't ya know it, one o' them there dimensional portals opens up, unleashing a plethora of demons on the city. By Ron Marz, Cully Hamner, and Romeo Tanghal. According to Marz, "A good portion of the issue deals with setting up Kyle's

MORE PICKS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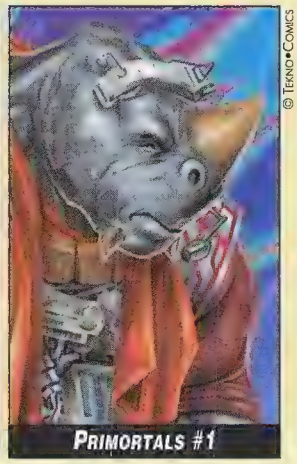
Mr. Hero—The Newmatic Man #1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Primortals #1

[friendly] relationship with Donna. Along with that, we've got this real wild dimensional portal which is pushing demons into an alley next to Kyle's building. It's the first time that Kyle's actually come against anything mystical, which is interesting." **$1.50**

RCA The Incredible Hulk #425

MARVEL The conclusion to "The Fall of the Pantheon" sees the return of the savage Hulk! The Hulk, Betty, and the whole Pantheon gang are in for some major-league changes. Such an issue deserves at least 48 pages and a shameless hologram cover. By Peter David, Gary Frank, Liam Sharp, Cam Smith, and Robin Riggs. David says, "Don't let the simplistic nature of the description 'The return of the Savage Hulk' fool you, because we've tossed a lot of things out there in order to make sure that everything we're doing [is not] being telegraphed early. All I will say is that matters which have been building for quite some time build to a climax that no one will see coming. At least one character dies, maybe more, and there's a major cliffhanger at the end." (Something like: "Hulk all bound up. Eat too much cheese! Argghh!") **$3.50 (ENHANCED EDITION); $2.25 (REGULAR EDITION)**

RCA John Byrne's Next Men #30: Lies #4 (of 4)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Guess what—the lies are over and everything makes sense. Well, not exactly, but John Byrne does tell all in this awesome conclusion to the first chapter in the lives of the Next Men. Of course, there are a few new questions left unanswered; these will be answered in May's *JBNM* #31 when the team battles dinosaurs. (No kidding.) By John Byrne, who unfortunately was unavailable for comment, but if he was available, he'd probably say, "Don't mock me, boy, you're playing with fire!" **$2.50**

Lobo #12

DC COMICS Lobo goes ballistic when his bike is totaled in an accident with Postman Pat's mail truck. When Pat delivers the wrong replacement parts for the bike, Lobo goes *super*ballistic and drives Pat over the edge. (The edge of a cliff, we hope.) If you thought our Main Man was bad, wait'll you see what happens when you push a postman too far! Lots o' chuckles and yuks brought to you by Alan Grant, Val Semeiks, and John Dell. **$1.95**

Lone Ranger and Tonto #4 (of 4)

TOPPS The final issue of the mini-series sees our boys face off against the Aztec God, who's just wreaking havoc throughout San Antonio. Plus, we learn Tonto's deep dark secret, something not even the Lone Ranger knows! Yep, it's true—he's not just the president, he's also a client. By Joe R. Lansdale, Tim Truman, and Rick Magyar. **$2.50**

Mr. Hero—The Newmatic Man #1

TEKNO•COMIX You don't know it, but there's a really bad being known as the Teknophage that's taking over the world. But have no fear—Mr. Hero, The Newmatic Man (an out-of-date robotic man, who was put on Earth over a century ago by the Teknophage) can stop him. This issue, the Teknophage attempts to wipe out Mr. Hero, removing any possibility of opposition. This series's premise was created by Neil Gaiman, and this issue is brought your way by James Vance, Ted Slampyak, and Bob McLeod. **$1.95**

Pitt #7

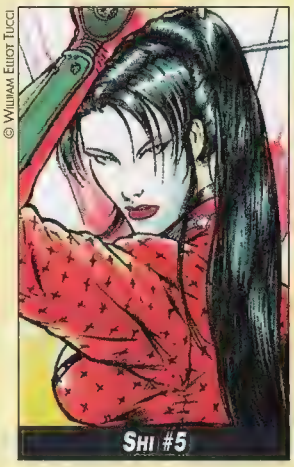
IMAGE Dale Keown walks up to Todd McFarlane and says, "Hey, Todd, I've got a great new character I want to bring to Image. He's a big, gray guy, with lotsa muscles, and no nose." "No nose?" replies McFarlane. "Then how does he smell?" "Terrible!" laughs Keown! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha...sniff. Ha. Anyway, the "Noseless Wonder" gets really, really, really close to Timmy and his unknown abductors. By Brian Hotton and Dale Keown. **$1.95**

Prime #18

MALIBU There's a new, young, hip hero in town and his name's Turbo. He's also Prime's new partner. What the? Partner? Prime don't need no stinkin' partner. Well, Prime is just about as happy about the whole thing as we are. Plus, the Manhattan Project tries to evict our hero from the city! By Gerard Jones, Len Strazewski, Joel Thomas, and Jason Martin. **$1.95**

Primortals #1

TEKNO•COMIX Millenia ago, an extremely advanced race came to Earth and grabbed a number of primitive beasts, who were quickly evolved to a much higher level on the evolutionary scale, so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Shi #5

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Silver Surfer #100

MORE PICKS

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THE SQUAD #0A

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STAR WARS: TALES OF THE JEDI ...#2

that they could be used as slaves. Now, The Primaster (a former exercise machine?), for unknown reasons, has freed them all and they're heading to Earth. Leonard Nimoy has created this alien-encountering epic. By Chris Worley, Scott Eaton, and Mike Barreiro. **$1.95**

ROBIN #13

DC COMICS High above the streets, Robin tackles a winged hit-man-for-hire named Steeljacket (wouldn't that be kind of heavy?), who's out for his blood. Meanwhile, in the Batcave, a very different confrontation takes place. By Chuck Dixon, Tom Grummett, and Ray Kryssing. Dixon says, "Basically, back at the Batcave, Dick Grayson and Bruce Wayne have the conversation that they never had. It answers a lot of questions. Why did Dick Grayson leave, and how did Bruce Wayne feel about that? Why didn't Bruce Wayne pick Dick Grayson to stand in for him instead of Azrael? They settle a lot of issues between them. The end of this issue heralds a permanent change in Batman's costume." **$1.50**

SANDMAN #66

VERTIGO/DC "The Kindly Ones" continues. People are dying left and right as Nuala attempts to save Morpheus's life. You know, for a happy-sounding storyline, an awful lot of people are getting hurt, maimed, or killed. "Kindly," indeed! By Neil Gaiman and Marc Hempel. **$1.95**

SHI #5

CRUSADE In part five of "Way of the Warrior," Shi still has Arashi under siege, but his Yakuza buddies are beginning to notice. They fear he's losing his hold within New York, so they send a whole buncha troops to help him out. When the underworld's best enforcers meet up with Shi, there's bound to be non-stop, rip-roarin' action. So hold on to your kimonos! By William Tucci, Peter Gutierrez, and Barry Orkin. **$2.75**

SILVER SURFER #100

MARVEL After giving his soul to Mephisto (yeah, he lost it in a poker bet), the Surfer must fight the Lord of Stench to reclaim it. The cosmic battle, which stretches from Mephisto's stinkin' realm all the way to the stars, destroys all that is the Surfer. After this 48-pager, the Silver Surfer will never be the same. (Is it just me, or does this seem to be the year of "never the same again"? What's next? The X-Men will be canceled? Uh...) By Ron Marz, Joe Phillips, and J. Martin. **$3.95 (ENHANCED EDITION); $2.25 (REGULAR EDITION)**

SPAWN #26

IMAGE Spawn makes a big boo-boo. Instead of helping out a friend in need (probably John Byrne or Peter David), Spawn decides to use his powers to solve some of his own problems. For this selfish, perhaps even malicious, act, done solely for the purpose of furthering his own needs, Spawn must pay a terrible price. Spawn bad! Donut good! By Todd McFarlane. **$1.95**

SPECTRE #25

DC COMICS "The Book of Judgment," Part 3 (of 3). The secret identity of the Spectre's arch-enemy (how could anyone be against arches? I mean, they have such a useful purpose and all), and just plain evil guy, Azmodus is finally revealed! (He's really Irwin Schwab.) Azmodus goes after Father Craemer, the Spectre's anchor in the human world. By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake. **$1.95**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

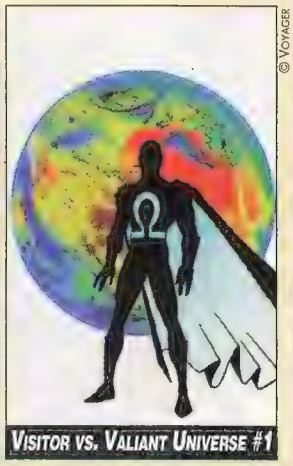
MARVEL The "Web of Death" storyline begins in *Amazing Spider-Man* #397. After being poisoned by the Vulture, ol' Webhead fights for his life, while the buxom villainess Stunner and a certain tentacled bad guy (Doctor Squid?) just make matters worse. Then jump over to *Spectacular Spider-Man* #220 for part two of "Web of Death." Spidey battles Stunner and Dr. Octopus, and we find out the reason Mary Jane hasn't been feeling so well lately. (What a baby she is.) Hop on over to *Web of Spider-Man* #120 for part one of "Web of Life." A figure from the clone's (ugh) past comes after him (it's probably the clone's clone). Then skip to *Spider-Man* #54 for part two of the fascinating "Web of Life" storyline. The mysterious figure from the ugh's (clone) past continues to chase him, as does that funny-looking Caine guy. **$2.25 EACH; $2.75—*SPIDER-MAN***

THE SQUAD #0A (OF 4)

MALIBU At last, learn the full story behind Hardcase's first team.

© Harris

VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #8


© Voyager

VISITOR VS. VALIANT UNIVERSE #1

MORE PICKS

After gaining special powers, four L.A. teens join together to form The Squad. I bet I know how *this* one ends. Mwah-hah-hah-hah! By James Hudnall, Scott Benefiel, and Jason Rodriguez. **$2.25**

Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—Dark Lords of the Sith, Book 1 #2 (of 6)

DARK HORSE Two young aristocrats, Satal and Aleema, make use of the dark side of the Force to help them annex the galaxy. The threat of war becomes quite real when the Jedi start planning their defense. On the romantic side, Ulic Qel-Droma and Nomi Sunrider start swappin' spit. By Tom Veitch, Kevin Anderson, Chris Gossett, and Bob Wiacek. **$2.50**

Static #19

MILESTONE/DC "What Are Little Boys Made Of?" Part 4 (of 5). Anti-gay violence runs through Dakota as the Sons of Odin return, causing Static to jump into the fray. Also, Virgil tries to regain Frieda's trust and friendship. Forget the candy and flowers, buddy. Buy her a Porsche. By Ivan Velez Jr., Wilfred, and John Stanisci. **$1.75**

Superboy #11

DC COMICS Techno's already killed a Superboy impersonator, and now the Silicon Dragons decide it's time for the real thing to buy it. Since virtual reality is Techno's specialty, all sorts of trouble occurs when Superboy is duped into fighting the Hawaiian police. By Eddie Berganza, Tom Grummett, and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.50**

Superman books

DC COMICS In *Superman: The Man of Steel* #40, Metropolis is flooded with strange, perplexing creatures. It's up to Supes to save the city or go bonkers! *Superman* #96 has the big guy trapped in a virtual reality battlefield, where he fights to prove that he's still alive! In *Adventures of Superman* #519, learn the truth behind who's buried in Superman's tomb, and see the big "S" tackle the maniac responsible for all the torture he's suffered over the past few months. Supergirl guest stars in *Action Comics* #706, as she, Clark, and Perry White visit Smallville. **$1.50 EACH**

© Aegis Entertainment

WildC.A.T.s #15

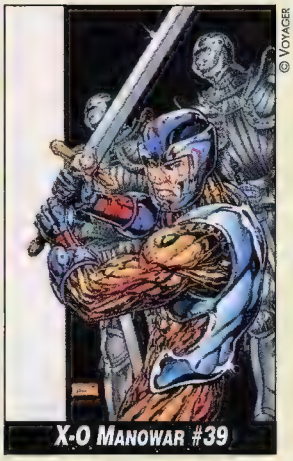
X #9

© Dark Horse

© Voyager

X-O Manowar #37

© Voyager



X-O Manowar #39

Uncanny X-Men #320

MARVEL Legion escapes, and the X-Men head to Israel to find him and chow down on some falafel. Also, Lilandra finds some flaws in the M'krann crystal (you know, the one that Phoenix fixed back in issue #108? Boy, that'll be real lame if they make like a "Dark Phoenix II" or somethin'). This issue starts things off for the big shake-up coming in January. Can you say massive destruction, boys and girls? I thought you could. By Scott Lobdell, Roger Cruz, and Dan Green. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

Vengeance of Vampirella #8

HARRIS Vampirella and Pendragon team up with Walker and a bunch of fallen angels to keep some avenging angels at bay. Plus, Adam Van Helsing makes a grave error with a deadly foe. I guess it could be worse, though—he could make a deadly error with a grave foe. By Tom Sniegoski, Kevin Sharpe, and Keith Wilson. **$2.95**

Visitor vs. The Valiant Universe #1 & #2

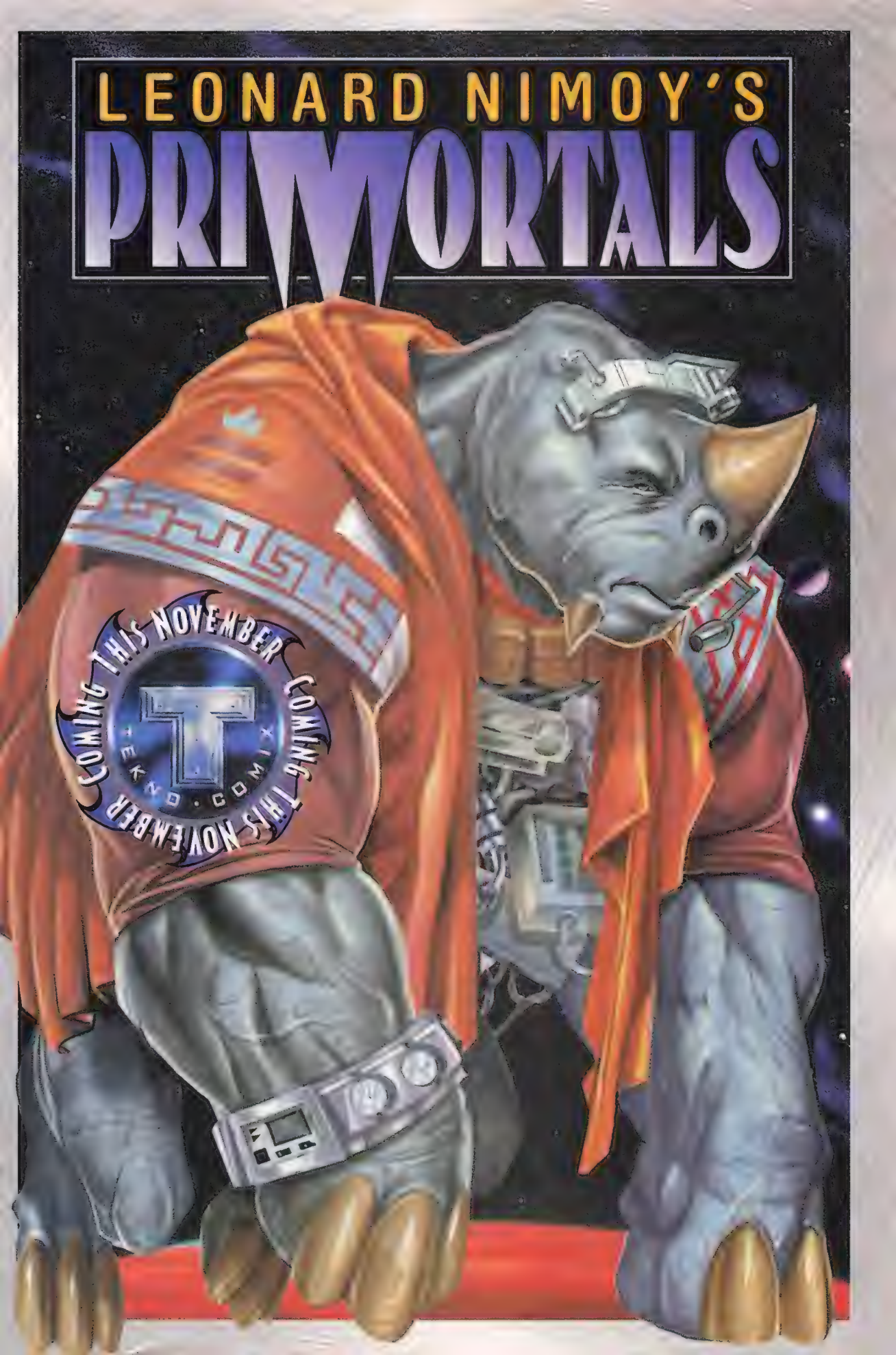
VALIANT After Los Angeles experiences a (surprise!) earthquake, the mysterious Visitor appears. Harada quickly turns the public against the new guy—can the combined might of Solar, X-O, the Armorines, Secret Weapons, and Bob Denver conquer the Visitor? Hey, it's comic book-misunderstanding-turned-maulat its finest. By Kevin VanHook and Bryan Hitch. **$2.95 EACH**

WildC.A.T.s #15

IMAGE Get the inside scoop on the Black Razors, as they hunt down a Cabal assassin who's after the WildC.A.T.s. This isn't as easy as it sounds, though, since Ben Santini (formerly of Sha Na Na), the Razor's new leader, can't stand the WildC.A.T.s. (Maybe he should just lean them against the wall, or glue their feet to the floor.) By James Robinson and Travis Charest. **$1.95**

Wolverine #89

MARVEL He's baaa-aaack! You knew the big lug just couldn't stay away from the X-Men, didn't ya? Well, he's decided to return, but there's a flaming problem in his way, namely Ghost Rider. But GR's such a wuss these days, Skipper from *Barbie Fashion* could


LEONARD NIMOY'S
PRIMORTALS
COMING THIS NOVEMBER
COMING THIS NOVEMBER
TEKNO COMIX

MORE PICKS

pummel him. By Larry Hama, Adam Kubert, and Mark Farmer. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

RSA X #9

DARK HORSE Since X has declared all-out war on Arcadia's underworld, criminals and power brokers are running scared. But mob boss Carmine Tango is the one man who'll stand in X's way. Is this the end of X and his War for Arcadia? By Steven Grant, Doug Mahnke, and Jimmy Palmiotti. Grant says of the issue, "This is the first character that I know of who's gone out of his way to tear his own city down. X is planning to rebuild from the ground up. This is the real beginning of the War for Arcadia. X is going for the jugular now." **$2.50**

X-Men #40

MARVEL Legion finds a new power and decides to pull a Hal Jordan, and try to change history. It's up to the X-Men and Cable to put an end to his evil, no-good, lowdown, rotten plans. Will they be able to stop him in time? (Good God, I hope not. I've had about enough of those mutants.) By Fabian Nicieza, Andy Kubert, and Matthew Ryan. **$1.95 (DELUXE EDITION); $1.50 (REGULAR EDITION)**

X-O Manowar #37-#40

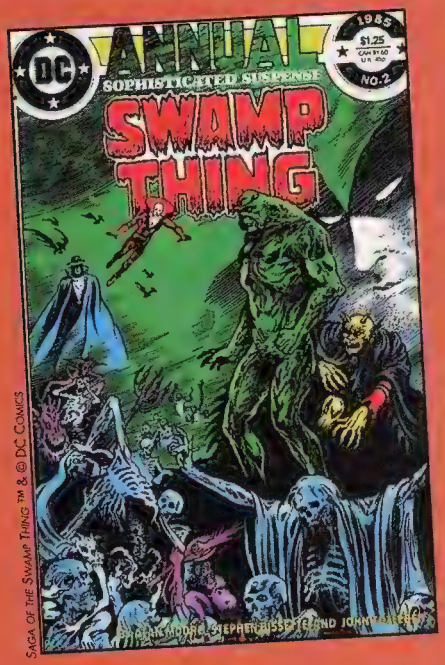
VALIANT In these four issues: "The Wolfbridge Affair." Wolfbridge, an enemy from Randy and Paul's (sniff—rest in peace, buddy) Secret Service days, is now killing off the members of their old unit, one by one. When Aric joins in, he soon learns of Wolfbridge's true plans, which include a worldwide nuclear threat! This four-part weekly storyline promises some hard-hitting action and plenty of co-ed nekkid lime green Jello™ wrestling! By Jorge González, Rik Levins, and Randy Elliot. **$2.25 EACH**

RSA Zorro #11

TOPPS In the final part of his Lady Rawhide adventure, Zorro's got some problems. He's hurt and trapped inside Capitan Monasterio's treasure room with Ms. Rawhide (I can think of worse situations). The only way out is through a door that's being ripped apart by Monasterio's men. By Don McGregor and Hearn Cho. McGregor says, "*Zorro* #11 has a culmination scene between Zorro and Lady Rawhide that we have been leading up to since her introduction in *Zorro* #3. This is the issue where Lady Rawhide tells Zorro to drop his pants. I can't say more!" **$1.50**

good & cheap

Good-readin' books you can still pick up cheap!



SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING™ & © DC COMICS

Saga of the Swamp Thing Annual #2

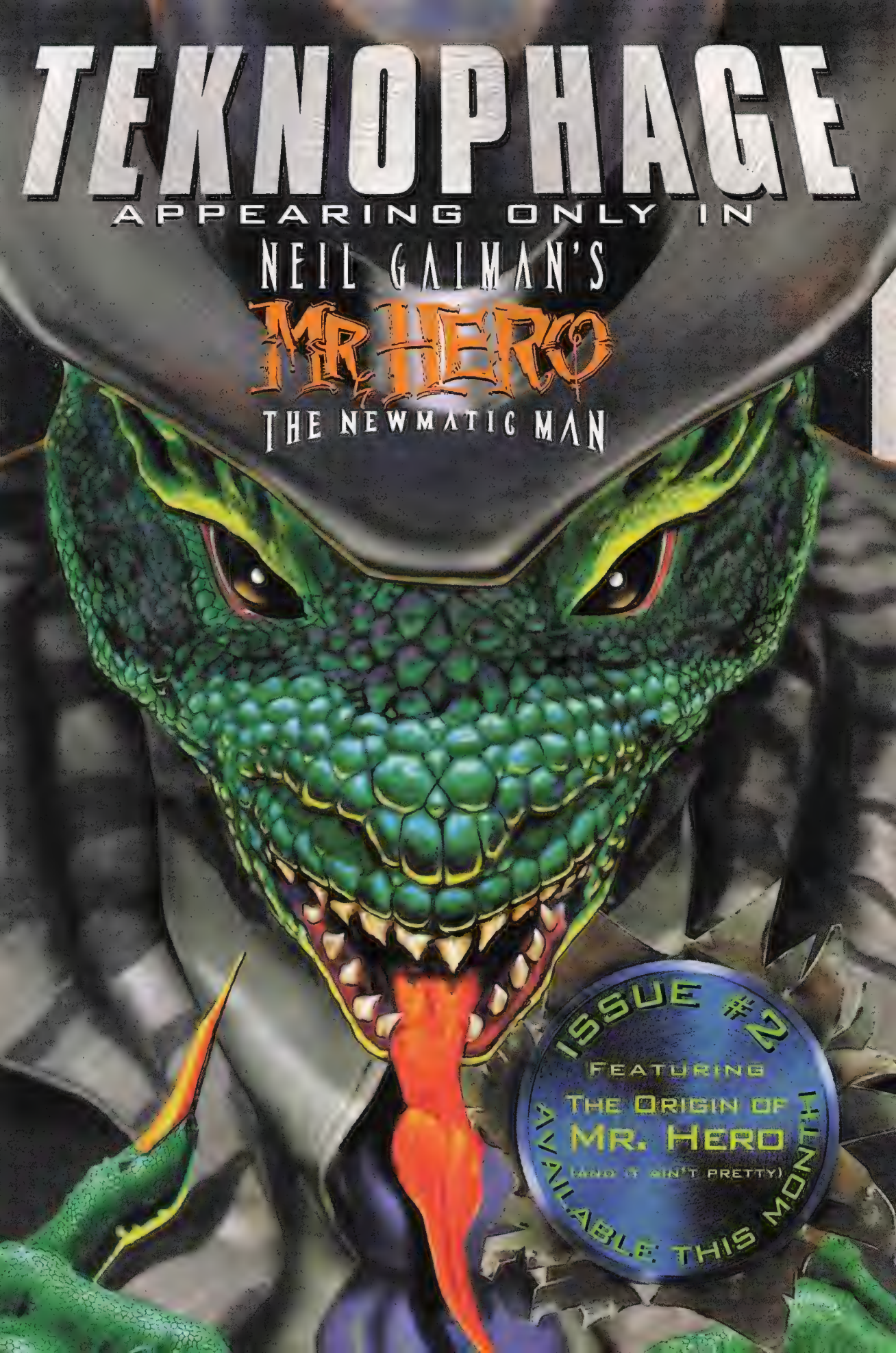
Writer: *Alan Moore*
Artists: *Stephen Bissette and John Totleben*
Current Value: *$5.25*

Without a doubt, Alan Moore, Stephen Bissette, and John Totleben revolutionized the DC Universe with their version of *Saga of the Swamp Thing* in the early '80s, and opened the door for the present-day Vertigo line. Single-handedly, *Swamp Thing* brought gothic horror back to modern comic readers.

One of their best stories is "Down Among the Dead Men" from *Saga of the Swamp Thing Annual* #2. After his apparent demise, Swamp Thing's arch-enemy, the evil Anton Arcane, returns from the grave, possesses Swamp Thing's friend Matt Cable, and threatens to bring all that is evil down upon unsuspecting Louisiana. In the battle that ensues, Swamp Thing manages to defeat Arcane, but at the tragic cost of the lives of Matt and his lovely wife Abby, the woman Swamp Thing has come to love.

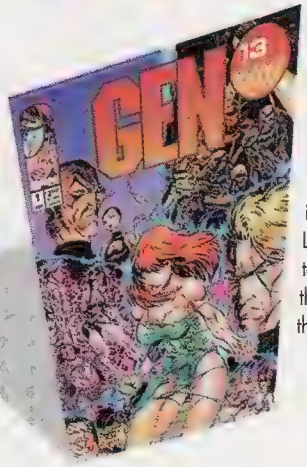
To save Abby's life, Swamp Thing must descend into the horrors of Hell to rescue her soul. Vertigo fans will have a field day on this dark pilgrimage, as four of the more macabre DC characters—Deadman, the Phantom Stranger, the Spectre, and the Demon—become Swamp Thing's spiritual guides and lead him through some infamous territory. With Abby's life in the balance, it is an epic struggle of good versus evil, and the power of hope over despair.

Running in line with current high-format books like *Golden Age* and *Marvels*, how can you go wrong with a Moore, Bissette, and Totleben *Swamp Thing* for the same price? ☆


TEKNOPHAGE
APPEARING ONLY IN
NEIL GAIMAN'S
MR. HERO
THE NEWMATIC MAN
ISSUE #2
FEATURING
THE ORIGIN OF
MR. HERO
(AND IT AIN'T PRETTY)
AVAILABLE THIS MONTH

TOP TEN COMICS

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are this month's hottest back issues.**



1. GEN13 #1

ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner WRITER: Bradon Choi

Boy, after reading that Fredric Wertham feature on page 92, I wonder what he'd think of this cover. Let's see—healthy young girl, ripped shirt, panties showing...yes sir, I feel like going out and committing heinous crimes and doin' stuff that'll get me 15 minutes of exposure on *A Current Affair*. Ah, but all levity aside, go out and prey on society. No, no, just kidding; let's talk about how hot the *Gen13* series is. Let's see, for four straight months, it's been the number one back issue in the country; copies are harder to find than an uncorrupted minor who collects comics. In fact, these babies are fetchin' prices so high, the youth of America has no choice but to beat the elderly and take their Social Security checks, just so they can complete their collection. Mighty hot book.

2. GEN13 #2

ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner WRITERS: Bradon Choi and Jeff Mariotte

Well, we've gotten the point across that *Gen13* is hotter then Teri Hatcher in a tube top (and we've exhausted our supply of *Seduction of the Innocent*-themed jokes), so let's talk about the book. *Gen13* focuses on five unrelated, superpowered teens: Fairchild, Grunge, Rainmaker, Burnout, and Freefall. The story follows these teens as they try to cope with the powers they received thanks to a secret government test (that was conducted on their parents, who passed down the genes), all the while battling evil government types, not too-friendly super villains, the occasional Pitt guest appearance, and the hardest stuff of all: everyday teenager crap. Yup, as opposed to most of today's books, *Gen13*'s characters have personal lives. Now *there's* an underused gimmick.

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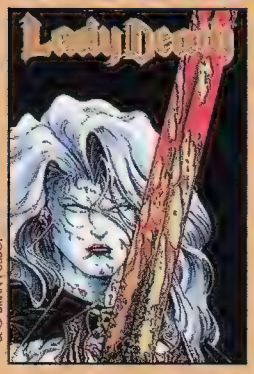
3. LADY DEATH #1



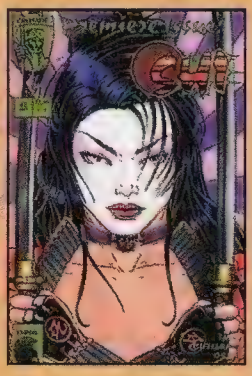
ARTIST: Steven Hughes
WRITER: Brian Pulido

Before we go into Lady Death here, try this little trick at home. Place your finger at the bottom of that bloody sword there, right at the base. See? Looks like a giant french fry covered with ketchup! Boy, the subliminal crap you find hidden in comics today is amazing. Anywho, *Lady Death*, after coming within centimeters of dethroning *Gen13* for the #1 spot for several months, drops a notch. Don't count her out yet, though. With the bad girl trend still going strong, and her major role in the current *Evil Ernie: Revenge* mini series, this pasty broad might leapfrog right to the número uno spot! (Second little trick you can try at home: play leapfrog in a thong. You'll be picking that wedgie for a week.)

™ & © Brian Pulido.

4. SHI #1

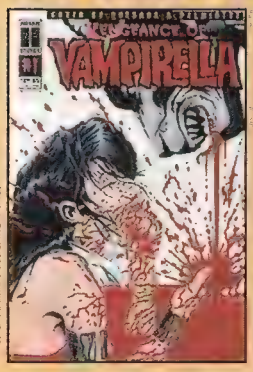
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Harvey Mercadoocasio
WRITERS: William Tucci and and Peter Gutierrez



Part of the final exam for Clown College is to create your own distinct clown face as your "signature." That, and kill a guy with a broken beer bottle. So, why is *Shi* hot? Simple. It grabbed fandom's attention during this whole bad girl phenomenon (S.A.T. word), and with its excellent storytelling and awesome artwork (really underrated stuff), it held onto the fans. So, it has quality, and it has appeal; what's the mysterious third ingredient? Availability, hot damnit! Not too many of these suckers were printed, so the mystical rule of supply and demand comes roarin' in like an oil tanker with its captain hopped up on gin, and *bam*, you've got a book that's primed for this here Top Ten.

™ & © William Elliott Tucci

5. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1



™ & © Harris Publication Inc.

ARTIST: Buzz
WRITER: Tom Sniegoski

Y'know, if they ever make a Vampirella movie, Tom Cruise should play the lead. Heck, he wouldn't be a worse choice here than he was for Lestat in the *Interview with a Vampire* flick. (What the hell were they thinkin'?) Though it's nigh-impossible to do here in Top Ten Land, let's go into why Vampi here is just soooo hot, without sounding too repetitive. First off, it's a bad girl book. Boom. It's hot. Second, Vampi already has a cult fan following from her '60s Warren magazine. Boom. It's hot. Lastly, the series is done pretty well, with both art and story being fairly cool. Boom. It's hot. The final diagnosis? Boom. It's hot.

6. EVIL ERNIE: RESURRECTION #1

ARTISTS: Steven Hughes and Mark Morales
WRITER: Brian Pulido

™ & © Brian Pulido

To help insure that this series does well, the Chaos! Comics crew put three sure-fire winners in this kick-off issue: Lady Death. As far as storyline, well, this ain't no day at the nude beach (though it's close!). Y'see, Ernest Fairchild was abused as a child. When scientists (as well as Lady Death's supernatural tamperings) "screwed up," weenie wittle Ernest gained the power to reanimate and control the dead. He created a "Psycho Plague" that wiped out almost all life in New Jersey (What's wrong with that?), but was then blown to the proverbial bits, by his psycho-therapists. Now Ernie's back, and he's got a hankerin' to do Clive Barker stuff to people, and since the Comics Code is out the door, he does!

7. FLASH #92

Artists: Mike Wieringo and Jose Marzan Jr.
Writer: Mark Waid

™ & © DC Comics

Holy guacamole! A DC book!! There hasn't been a DC book in the hot charts in three months, since *Catwoman* #12 clawed its way in. Boy, DC should kill/maim/introduce replacements every month. Actually, Impulse is scheduled not to replace Wally West as the Flash (or is he?), but to receive his own ongoing title in early '95. Impulse, AKA Bart Allen, is the grandson of Iris Allen. Born with super-speed, Bart's hyper-metabolism was going non-stop, and would've ultimately led to his death. Luckily, Gran'ma Iris introduced him to good ol' Wally, who has been helping him out. Seeing as how kick-ass awesome DC's teen books are (Except yours, Anima. Get lost.), *Impulse* will definitely be one book worth watchin'.

8. ZORRO #3

Artists: Mike Mayhew, Andy Mushynsky, and Hilary Barta
Writer: Don McGregor

Grease me up, I'm stickin' a free plug in here. For those of you who are too asleep to notice, Topps Comics are putting out some of the coolest darn books this side of the Mississippi. *Zorro* kicks serious butt, as does the excellent *Lone Ranger and Tonto* series (BUY THAT BOOK!), and the *Mars Attacks* mini-series which wrapped up a couple of months back was quite solid! Do yourself a favor: go drop the latest rehashed crap book and try something new—go pick up a Topps book. There, now that I've vented, let me put my clothes back on and say that not only is this book ridin' high on the bad girl wave (Zorro's arch-nemesis Lady Rawhide makes her debut here), but cover artist Adam Hughes is "King of Hot Babes."

™ & © Zorro Productions Inc.

9. GEN[13] #5A

™ & © Aegis Entertainment DBA WildStorm Productions

Artists: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner
Writers: Brandon Choi and J. Scott Campbell

Hey kids, what's hotter than a crispy worm who was washed out into the street after a huge rainstorm, and couldn't crawl back onto the curb in time, so it was baked by a mid-afternoon August sun until it resembled a McDonald's french fry that got stuck in the fryer for two work shifts? What? You don't know? Well, seeing as how we forgot what the hell the actual question was with that ridiculous run-on sentence, we don't either—so let's talk about how annoying the French are. What the hell is their problem? We saved their butts in World War II and all they can do is eat snails and be snotty. Hey, up yours, Frenchie! Oh wait, chase covers. Yeah, *Gen[13]* #5A is so hot because the regular series is doing well, and this book's cover is a limited edition variant. Hot stuff.

10. LADY DEATH #2

Artist: Steven Hughes
Writer: Brian Pulido

™ & © Brian Pulido.

In about 10 years, Lady Death is going to have the most horrific lower back problems. As a tip, Ms. Death, you may wanna have some of your....er, excess healthiness trimmed down a bit so your upper torso doesn't snap off like someone just did a Mortal Kombat fatality to ya. With that said, there ain't too much more that needs to be discussed, but seeing how it's my job to fill the word count every month, I'll say more. Let's see, I'll fill the rest of this space saying that *Lady Death* #2 was also underordered, it has pretty spiffy art, a pretty neat story, and everyone who owns a copy of this book is just that much cooler. There. ☆

TOP 100

Here's the list for OCTOBER...
a countdown of the most–ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors Inc.

(CE=Collector's Edition)

what was hOt 1 yeAr ago...

1. Spawn #12 (Image)
2. Gambit #1 (Marvel)
3. X-Men #27 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #307 (Marvel)
5. Cyberforce #1 (Image)
6. WildC.A.T.s #5 (Image)
7. X-Men 2099 #3 (Marvel)
8. Batman #502 (DC)
9. Detective Comics #669 (DC)
10. X-Force #29 (Marvel)

2 yeArs ago...

1. WetWorks #1 (Image)
2. X-Men #15 (Marvel)
3. Ravage 2099 #1 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #295 (Marvel)
5. X-Force #17 (Marvel)
6. Spider-Man 2099 #2 (Marvel)
7. Spawn #6 (Image)
8. X-Factor #85 (Marvel)
9. Silver Surfer #75 (Marvel)
10. Incredible Hulk #400 (Marvel)

3 yeArs ago...

1. Robin: The Joker's Wild #1 CE (DC)
2. X-Men #3 (Marvel)
3. X-Force #5 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #283 (Marvel)
5. Spider-Man #17 (Marvel)
6. Infinity Gauntlet #6 (Marvel)
7. X-Factor #73 (Marvel)
8. Robin: The Joker's Wild #1 (DC)
9. Ghost Rider #20 (Marvel)
10. Deathlok #6 (Marvel)

1. **Spawn #20 (Image)**
2. **Spawn #19 (Image)**
3. **X-Men #39 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)**
4. **Uncanny X-Men #319 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)**
5. **Generation X #2 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)**
6. **Bishop #1 (Marvel)**
7. **Wolverine #88 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)**
8. **Team 7 #1 (Image)**
9. **Batman vs. Pred. II: Bloodmatch #1 (DC)**
10. **X-Men Unlimited #7 (Marvel)**
11. Batman #513 (DC)
12. X-Force #41 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)
13. Superman #95 (DC)
14. Superman: The Man of Steel #39 (DC)
15. Action Comics #705 (DC)
16. Adventures of Superman #518 (DC)
17. Backlash #1 (Image)
18. Black and White #1 (Image)
19. X-Factor #109 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)
20. Detective Comics #680 (DC)
21. Savage Dragon #13 (Image)
22. Hellshock #4 (Image)
23. X-Men 2099 #15 (Marvel)
24. Amazing Spider-Man #396 (Marvel)
25. Star Wars: Tales...Dk. Lords...Sith, Bk. 1 #1 (D. Horse)
26. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #66 (DC)
27. Tales to Astonish #1 (Marvel)
28. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #33 (DC)
29. Spider-Man #53 (Marvel)
30. Cable #18 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)
31. StormWatch #16 (Image)
32. Badrock & Company #2 (Image)
33. Robin #12 (DC)
34. Fantastic Four #395 (Marvel)
35. Hulk 2099 #1 (Marvel)
36. Youngblood #10 (Image)
37. Catwoman #16 (DC)
38. Excalibur #84 Deluxe Edition (Marvel)
39. WildC.A.T.s Sourcebook #2 (Image)
40. WildC.A.T.s Adventures #2 (Image)
41. Venom: Separation Anxiety #1 (Marvel)
42. Web of Spider-Man #119 (Marvel)
43. Superboy #10 (DC)
44. Green Lantern #57 (DC)
45. Incredible Hulk #424 (Marvel)
46. Doom's IV #4 (Image)
47. Spectacular Spider-Man #219 (Marvel)
48. Deathblow #10 (Image)
49. Sandman #65 (DC)
50. Savage Dragon #14 (Image)
51. Beavis & Butt-Head #10 (Marvel)
52. Evil Ernie: Revenge #1 (Chaos!)
53. Spider-Man 2099 #26 (Marvel)
54. Code Name: Stryke Force #8 (Image)
55. Fantastic Force #2 (Marvel)
56. Prophet Sourcebook (Image)
57. Team Youngblood #14 (Image)
58. Spider-Man Adventures #1 CE (Marvel)
59. Brigade #13 (Image)
60. Vengeance of Vampirella #7 (Harris)
61. Batman: Castle of the Bat (DC)
62. Supreme: Glory Days #1 (Image)
63. Youngblood Strikefile #18 (Image)
64. Bloodstrike #15 (Image)
65. Supreme #20 (Image)
66. Shadowhawk #14 (Image)
67. Force Works #6 (Marvel)
68. Steel #10 (DC)
69. Daredevil #335 (Marvel)
70. Newmen #7 (Image)
71. Aliens/Predator: Deadliest...Species #8 (D. Horse)
72. Silver Surfer #99 (Marvel)
73. Star Trek: TNG/Star Trek: DS9 #1 (DC)
74. Lobo #11 (DC)
75. Iron Man #311 (Marvel)
76. Star Trek: DS9/Star Trek: TNG #1 (Malibu)
77. Ren & Stimpy #25 CE (Marvel)
78. Troll Halloween Special (Image)
79. Captain America #434 (Marvel)
80. Aquaman #4 (DC)
81. Books of Magic #8 (DC)
82. Ninjak #12 (Valiant)
83. Ghost Rider 2099 #8 (Marvel)
84. Avengers #381 (Marvel)
85. Flash #96 (DC)
86. New Warriors #54 (Marvel)
87. Ghost Rider #56 (Marvel)
88. Radioactive Man #1000 (#6) (Bongo)
89. Thor #481 (Marvel)
90. Classic Star Wars: Return...Jedi #1 (D. Horse)
91. Star Trek: TNG—Shadowheart #1 (DC)
92. Vamps #5 (DC)
93. Ultra X-Men Collection #1 (Marvel)
94. Justice League America #94 (DC)
95. Freak Force #10 (Image)
96. War Machine #9 (Marvel)
97. X-Men Adventures Season II #11 (Marvel)
98. New Titans #116 (DC)
99. X-O Manowar #36 (Valiant)
100. ClanDestine #3 (Marvel)

Wizard Market WATCH

by **Jon Warren**
and **Marc Wilkofsky**

How to Survive in the Comic Book Market

Don't go insane trying to figure out how to be a collector in today's somewhat frightening market—we're here to help you know which books are worth taking a bite out of your wallet for.

RECENT RELEASES (1991-1994)

If you're looking for a sure bet, almost any Superman book from this decade is worth finding, buying, and keeping. The Doomsday/Death issues lead the pack, of course, with *Superman* #75 still a strong mover, and very hard to track down. The four current titles are doing extremely well in today's market, better than they have in years; you can't miss with the Man of Steel.

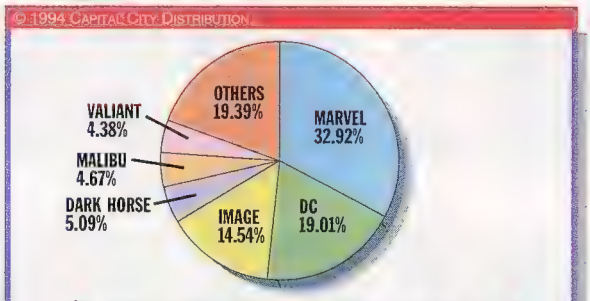
As for other DC books, many of the company's Zero Hour-related offerings have steamed up the churning market brew. Start with the central *Flash* #94 and #0 (along with #92, young Impulse's first appearance), add a spoonful of the planet-shaking *Green Lantern* #0, throw in the recent *Legion* books and two *Showcase '94* crossover issues (#8 and #9), and spice it all up with a copy of the very important *Robin* #0 (where Dick Grayson dons the Batduds), and you have a fairly scalding market feast. Finally, a couple of the KnightsEnd books have seen activity: *Detective Comics* #677, which features Nightwing taking on Azrael, and *Legends of the Dark Knight* #63, which gave us the long-awaited final Bruce/Jean Paul clash. Be sure to keep an eye on all the KE books, Caped Collectors.

Marvel continues to shock its readers and thrill retailers with its fast-moving Spider-Storyline. As fans' hearts beat wildly, waiting for the Spider-Clone story's payoff in *Amazing Spider-Man* #400, they're scrambling through comic stores, picking up the clone's appearances in the hero's four ongoing titles. *Web of Spider-Man* #117—with the meeting between our wall-crawler and the other guy—and #118—where Ben Reilly dons his costume—are the ones to watch in this group o' books. Also, *Generation X* #1 is doing well in the stores, as expected, making the *Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men* parts of this summer's "Phalanx Covenant" crossover—which introduced the new team of young mutants—very watchable. And most true X-Men collectors wouldn't be caught dead without a copy of *Uncanny X-Men* #266, the Gambit debut which is still seeing significant activity.

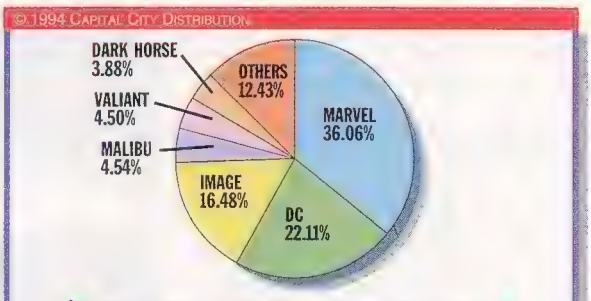
Image's *Gen*[13] is continuing to wreak havoc on the market, with all five issues of the mini-series—especially #1 to #3—steadily rising in value. These books chomped down on the Popularity Pie early this year, and haven't taken a break since. *Supreme* #25, with the Stephen Platt cover, and *Violator* #1 are both slowly opening the door to market importance.

Still on the Very Hot list are the bad girl books, which are definitely monster sellers. The cover of *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1 would have been more true-to-life if the heroine were bathing in money instead of blood; that book is a true burner, and the rest of her new series—along with Harris's first series—is just about as hot. Crusade's *Shi* #1 is slicing up the market fairly well, as is the increasingly huge *Shi* #2. Lady Death remains at the top of the heap; her #1 is a super-tough find and her *Swimsuit Special* is climbing the value ladder. Collectors should watch out for *Evil Ernie*, the original Eternity series and the first Chaos! series ("The Resurrection"), which are becoming an enormous pair in today's market. Retailers are seeing Eternity's #1, the Lady's first appearance, walking out their doors with intensity. Finally, bad girl collectors may panic when they realize the two Circe issues of DC's *Wonder Woman*—#88 and #89—and Topps's *Zorro* #3—new inductee Lady Rawhide's first appearance—are being scooped up considerably, but there are still copies out there, just waiting to be seized. So stop biting those nails and start looking.

A few Dark Horse titles are giving collectors goose bumps nowadays. There's the always-



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for SEPTEMBER, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for SEPTEMBER, according to Capital City Distribution

Dollar Share: This month saw DC regain some of the points it lost in August—2.39, to be exact—as its Zero Month offerings turned out to be fairly popular. Marvel stayed at about the same level as last month, as its X-books and Spider-titles keep selling steadily. Malibu went up about a point, thanks to some quality issues, and Valiant's share stayed exactly the same as in August, implying that the company's fans are staying with its books.

Piece Share: Marvel has *Generation X* and its first few Deluxe X-books to thank for its 1.48-point increase this month. DC dropped 0.48 points, resulting from a slight backlash after its Zero Hour-heavy August. Image, Malibu, and Valiant's shares increased a bit this month, but Dark Horse saw a decrease of 1.89 points, because it released 13 fewer books in September.

formidable *Star Wars* books, like *Dark Empire* and the first *Tales of the Jedi* series, the two original *Mask* series, led by the first series's #1, and the new *Madman Comics* series, which has enjoyed sizable market interest lately. Don't forget about Dark Horse when trying to beef up your collection—there are some solid winners lurking around your comic store!

MODERN AGE SELLERS (1970-1990)

It's a back issue phenomenon, and you just can't beat it. The interest in early issues of DC's *Sandman* cannot be stopped—actually, the throngs of collectors rummaging through retailers' boxes for Gaiman Gold—issues #1 and #8—can't be stopped. Interestingly enough, even though the reprint trade paperbacks are widely available, people won't be satisfied if they don't have the originals in hand.

The two "New" X-Men books, *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 and *X-Men* #94, are still solid sellers, and not the easiest finds. The upcoming overhaul of the X-titles may cast a powerful spell on the collectors of mutant memorabilia, and the early books in the "Dream Team II" era just might benefit from this.

Of course, the *Amazing Spider-Man* #149-#151 trio keeps clawing its way to the top of the Modern Age market—hey, it's pretty much *there* already! Helping these Spider-Clone issues is the growing speculation that our Spidey—he's on the psychotic side now, but he's still our Spidey—is actually the clone that was introduced in this almost-twenty-year-old story. This possible flip-flop will send these three issues soaring up in value like never before; if you think the last few months' activity was fierce, just wait till you see what happens if the above truth is revealed. *Amazing* #400 will probably be the one to do it...

The *Wolverine* mini-series still holds a lot of clout in the importance category. Logan fans want whatever books have Wolvie in 'em, no matter what, and those who don't have his 1982 mini are ready to pay what they have to in order to get it. Now that the hero's about to rejoin the X-Men, just about any Wolver-item will be a hot pick.

POPULAR SILVER AGE BOOKS (1955-1970)

Marvel and DC key first appearance and origin issues in high-grade condition continue to be the market leaders in the Silver Age sector.

Leading the pack for DC is the Silver Age cornerstone *Showcase* #4, the first SA appearance of the Flash. *The Brave and the Bold* #28—the Justice League of America's debut—has recently been moving well, probably because of its low price in comparison to other Silver Age keys.

At Marvel, *Amazing Fantasy* #15, the first appearance of Spider-Man, continues to be the most sought-after book in the high-end part of the market, while *Fantastic Four* #48, where the Silver Surfer said hello to the world, is the most sought-after of the under-$1,000 books.

The third annual auction of comic book collectibles at Christie's East in New York City will be held on Saturday, October 29. The sale will include some important and very valuable comics, and will give us a good idea of the current state of the market for rare comics.

Some of the highlights of the Silver Age section of the sale include multiple copies of *Amazing Fantasy* #15, *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, *Showcase* #4, *Mystery in Space* #1, *Tales to Astonish* #1, and high-grade copies of *Showcase* #1 and *Journey into Mystery* #10 from the Bethlehem collection, a pedigree collection of Silver Age books found in Bethlehem, Pa.

THE GOLDEN AGE MARKET (1938-1954)

Some record-setting sales of key Golden Age books occurred recently. Most of these record-setting prices were achieved for books from the legendary "Mile High" collection, so named because the books were originally located near Denver, Colorado. (Yes, many major comic collections are

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

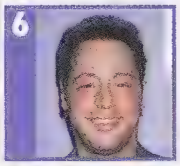
1 — Photo: Al Ortega
Todd McFarlane
Spawn

2 — Photo: Al Ortega
Frank Miller
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

3
Stephen Platt
Prophet

4
Greg Capullo
Angela

5 — Photo: Al Ortega
Marc Silvestri
Cyberforce


6
Joe Quesada
Ash

7 — Photo: J. Schuyler
Andy Kubert
X-Men

8 — Photo: Al Ortega
Rob Liefeld
Youngblood

9
Whilce Portacio
WetWorks

10 — Photo: J. Schuyler
Adam Kubert
Wolverine

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

1 — Photo: Al Ortega
Frank Miller
Sin City: The Big Fat Kill

2
Peter David
Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099

3 — Photo: Al Ortega
Neil Gaiman
Sandman

4
John Byrne
Next Men, Babe

5 — Photo: Al Ortega
Jeff Smith
Bone

6
Ron Marz
Green Lantern

7 — Photo: J. Schuyler
Scott Lobdell
Uncanny X-Men, Generation X

8 — Photo: J. Schuyler
John Ostrander
The Spectre, Eternal Warrior

9
Chuck Dixon
Batman

10 — Photo: Al Ortega
Fabian Nicieza
X-Men, New Warriors, Nova, Night Thrasher

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

named after the location of their discovery.) The books from this collection, which was found in the late 1970s, are of the highest caliber in terms of condition. The preservation of the books would make any mummy proud, with most of them being in Near Mint condition. The Mile High copy of *All-Star Comics* #3, the first appearance of the Justice Society of America, sold for $90,000. The Mile High copy of *Flash Comics* #1, the first appearance of the Golden Age Flash and Hawkman, sold for $100,000. The Mile High copy of *Adventure Comics* #40 and #48 also brought record prices, with #40, the Golden Age Sandman's first appearance, bringing in $80,000, and #48, the debut of the Golden Age Hourman (rest in peace, Mr. Tyler), selling for $40,000.

Books with early work by Steve Ditko, distinguished artist and creator of several major comic characters like the Question, are hot. The first published work by Ditko, *Black Magic* (vol. 4) #3 (Crestwood, 1953), recently sold for $150 in fine condition, a bargain when you consider the importance of Ditko's work. Look for Harvey's *Captain 3-D* #1, Ditko's second work, to go up in value.

Golden Age highlights of the upcoming Christie's auction include a superb, unrestored copy of *Batman Comics* #1, one of the finest existing copies of *Captain America* #1, a *Detective Comics* #38 (the first appearance of Robin), and a recently discovered collection of Golden Age books with superb page quality.

Finally, since it's around Halloween time, we thought we'd mention a few important horror comics of the past. First in line is *Air Fighters* (vol. 1) #3, a 1942 book from Hillman, which featured a horrible green monster by the name of the Heap. This creature preceded Swamp Thing by almost three decades, and many collectors see him (it?) as the more frightening of the two. Another important book o' fear is *Tomb of Terror* #15, published by Harvey in 1954, featuring a story where someone gets their face splattered with sulfuric acid. (*Not* particularly good for the skin.) There's also *Fantastic Fears* #5, a 1953 Ajax/Farrell book, which happens to be Steve Ditko's third published comic book work, and offers a gruesome coffin scene. Finally, there's EC's *Crime Suspenstories* #22, from 1954, which had a particularly memorable decapitated head cover. (You can take a look at this cover in this issue's Fredric Wertham article on page 92!) If you can get your hands on any original Golden Age horror comic, it would be an excellent addition to your collection—and it just might give you a hearty scare! ☆

Jon Warren and Marc Wilkofsky are regular contributors to *Wizard*, and they know the comic book market like nobody's business.

Market WATCHERS

It's **FREAK MONTH**! In honor of Halloween, the holiday of numerous double-takes, I've let out all the slightly off-center letter writers for this column. Prepare yourselves, readers...

Dear Marc and all the gang,

I need your help. I have a *Brave and the Bold* #1. The *Wizard* Price Guide lists this as $1,500; it also mentions a Viking Prince. But the story I have is about the Indians' succession from the United States. It came out in December of 1991. My question is this: what have I got, and how much is it worth?

Michael Johnson
Shelbyville, TN

Sorry, Michael; you've got the first issue of the 1991-92 six-issue mini-series, which is worth cover price—$1.75! The original first *B & B* is a *little* tougher to get your hands on (it's now worth $1,600, by the way). Remember to check the ever-handy year listings in the Guide if you encounter this type o' dilemma again. Hope you weren't eyeing a new sports car or something, thinking you had such a valuable book.

Dear Wizard,

To save space in the card price guide, you list singles and commons. Why don't you do the same for the comic book price guide?

Nelly Cung
Morris Plains, NJ

Here's where I ask all the non-freak Market Watchers to yell out their own individual answers (which should have something to do with the fact that the two guides are totally different, listing totally different types of *products*). There, are y'all happy?

Dear Wizard,

I found a comic stored up in the attic, and I'm just wondering how much this comic is worth. The name of the comic is *Nightmask* #3, from the company New Universe. Thanks!

Steven Hsieh
Queens, NY

Ha! That "treasure" from Marvel is worth a buck, at most. Keep searching up there, Steven.

Hey, Wizard,

I think *Gambit* #1 should go up a lot more because it was an awesome comic. Plus, I have a *Gammarauders* #8. How much is it worth (even though it sucks worse than *Spawn/Batman*)?

Casey Cathcart
St. Charles, MO

Real good reason for *Gambit* to go up, Casey! I guess that means *Animal Man*, my personal fave, should be way up there! And DC's *Gammacrappers* #8 will get you a buck, if you're lucky. (Hey—you can trade with Mr. Hsieh!)

Dear Wizard,

Mystique's first appearance in *Ms. Marvel* is not in issue #16, but in issue #18. Tigershark is in #16. Please make this correction in your Price Guide.

Janna K. Brown
Northport, AL

P.S. Rip open those polybags and read the comics! Years from now, when the world's population has finally managed to kill itself with wars and pollution, there will be bagged comics and plastic-covered couches in Near Mint condition, only slightly touched by humans. And all the plastic-covered things will be overrun by cockroaches. Read your comics before the roaches dance on them!

Actually, *MM* #16 does feature a cameo by Nightcrawler's maniacal mom (as does #17), and #18 holds her first full appearance. By the way, all three books (with #16 being the prime collectible in the market) have seen price increases in this issue! You know, I thought this would be a run-of-the-mill missive until I read your peculiar P.S., Janna.

And they get weirder...

Continued thataway

Hey, Market Watchers,

I have a suggestion (solution?) about what to do with polybagged comics.

Take a knife (or scissors, I don't care which), and put a series of slits in the bag. There you go! Your comic's still "inside the bag," and the slits will allow the comic to "breathe," so the chemicals won't damage it.

Am I right or am I right?

Simon Livingston
Oxford, NY

Sure, Simon—and would step 2 be "microwave for five minutes"?

Dear Wizard,

On the last few pages of *Hulk* #418, is that Death of DC/Vertigo, as in *Sandman* #8 and *Death: The High Cost of Living*? One retailer called me a lunatic and walked away saying, "No way."

JR "Rookie" Neal
Irving, TX

Let me tell you, readers—this guy wrote one wild, definitely freaky letter, full of many nutty questions. Well, JR, it is Death, and if you didn't read John McKeown's letter regarding her cameo in *Hulk* #421's letter column, then you might want to know the significance of the brush she gave Marlo. Four words: "A brush...with Death." (Ugh.) Thanks for all the Q's, and I'll try to get back to you personally with the A's, you nut.

Dear Wizard,

I own this comic that's not in your Price Guide. It's named *The Marvel Saga: The Official History of the Marvel Universe*. Its cover price is $1.00 and it's the #1 issue. It shows a picture of Galactus in the upper left-hand corner, and has a message saying: 1st Collector's Item Issue. The front cover includes Wolverine, the Fantastic Four, and Professor X. There is a picture of Spider-Man's head in the lower left-hand side of the cover. This is only on the front cover; it continues on the back. The comic shows the origin of all these characters, including Spider-Man and more. It contains art by Jack Kirby, John Byrne, and eight more. The writers are Stan Lee, Larry Lieber, H.E. Huntley, and John Byrne. Could you tell me how much it's worth?

Roberto Ko
Westfield, NJ

Two dollars.

Yeesh—what a brief reply to such a long question. And that's all, freaks! This was truly a load o' fun. Hope I wasn't too rough on anyone (Yeah, right!). Before I go, here's a treat for you Missing Link finders: a few of the wackiest answers we've seen!

"Each title's logo has yellow in it."–E.J. Carey, Seaford, DE
"The cover numbers are all divisible by three."–Erik Mickie, Panama City, FL
"They all have hot women with BIG BUTTS in them!"–Peter A. Uzzi, San Jose, CA
"The UPC code is in the bottom left-hand corner of each book."–Derek Bridges, Tifton, GA

Once again, people: please *read* those books! Later, nuts!

-Marc Wilkofsky
Brutal but Effective

WiN! *Sandman* (vol.2) #1!

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Missing Link

Here's your latest quest, Link Finders! Each month, we list three comic book issues that contain something in common: in content, characters, creators, or the like. Your job is to tell us what that something is.

For example, what do *Uncanny X-Men* #144, *Marvel Team-Up* #122, and *She-Hulk* (vol. 2) #8 all have in common? That's easy: all three feature guest appearances by the Man-Thing.

Get the idea? Of course, we won't make each contest *that* easy. You'll *definitely* have to ***read*** the three issues to find the answers, but hey, how hard could that be for you comic lovers? By the way, you won't have to be a regular reader of the particular titles to figure out the answer.

We'll randomly select an entry out of all the correct ones we receive. The winner of this month's contest will receive *Sandman* (vol.2) #1. So good luck, and good sleuthing!

Here are this month's batch o' books:

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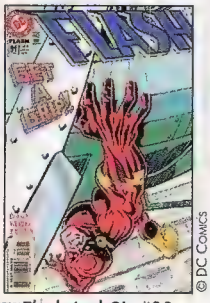
Adventures of Superman #502



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Flash (vol.2) #91

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Shadow of the Bat #30

Send all entries to:
Missing Link #40
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
Hurry! All entries must be received by December 29, 1994!

CONGRATULATIONS to Joseph R. Lytle, of Richmond Hill, N.Y.! He figured out issue #36's Missing Link: *Amazing Spider-Man* #42, *Avengers* #75, and *Uncanny X-Men* #168 all feature the first meeting between two characters who would later marry! Way to go, Joseph!

If you can read this fine print, then you're in.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and Susan Powter fanatics (hey, YOU stop the insanity!). Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the Missing Link on a three-by-five-inch index card or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry to Missing Link #40, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. Limit one entry per envelope. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated, or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. You know, I think Denny Dillon is a pretty good choice for the role of Roseanne. Who did Roseanne want anyway, Catherine Bach? **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by December 29, 1994.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on January 3, 1995, by Wizard Press. All decisions are final.

For the name of the winner, available after January 20, 1994, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Missing Link #40 Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch this column!

ALABAMA

NOVEMBER 5, HUNTSVILLE

Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Jaycee Community Bldg., Old Airport Rd., 35 tables @ $30 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Contact: Linda Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

NOVEMBER 26-27, BIRMINGHAM

Magic City Con, Birmingham Jefferson Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza, 150 tables starting @ $75 each, admission: 1 day-$10, 2 days-$15 or $10 in advance, 9am-6pm. Guests: Joe Phillips (Fleer X-Men Cards, *Silver Surfer*), L.A. Williams (Wizards of the Coast, *Jyhad*), Cully Hamner (*Firearm, StormWatch Special*), Adam Hughes (*Ghost, Penthouse Comix*), Brian Stelfreeze (*Shadow of the Bat*), Jason Pearson (*Vanguard, Savage Dragon: Blood & Guts* mini-series), Rick Mays (*Nomad, New Titans, Arsenal*), Dave Johnson (*SuperPatriot, Chain Gang War*), Karl Story (*Aliens vs. Predator, Aliens: Genocide, Savage Dragon*), Craig Brasfield (*Alpha Flight, New Warriors, Justice*), Frank Turner (*Cage, Justice*), Joel Thomas (Spawn pin-up), Bill Marimon (*Damage*), Jordi Ensign (*Second Life of Doctor Mirage*), and Don Hillsman II (*Damage*). *Magic* Tournament both days; Saturday is sanctioned by Wizards of the Coast, Sunday has a $500 cash prize (additional fee may be required for play). Contact: Jeff Alverson @ 205-941-2595.

ARKANSAS

NOVEMBER 19, LITTLE ROCK

Com-X I, Best Western Intown, I-30 & 6th Street, 35 tables @ $50 each, $2.00 admission, 9am-5pm. Contact: Cecil Johnson @ 501-794-3394.

CALIFORNIA

TUESDAYS, FRIDAYS, SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER, WHITTIER

Cardtown USA, 12327 Whittier Blvd. at the corner of Penn St., two miles east of the 605 Freeway, free admission, Tuesdays & Fridays 5-9:30pm, Saturdays & Sundays 10am-5pm. Tuesdays: free wax packs (one per person), Fridays: $100 show money members drawing, Saturdays: Members drawing, Sundays: Hourly door prizes. Always free parking, occasional guest appearances. Contact: Roger Sparling @ 310-693-1978.

OCTOBER 23 & NOVEMBER 20, SAN FRANCISCO

Super Comic/Toy Expo, Grosvenor Hotel, 380 So. Airport Blvd., 40 tables @ $65 each, $4.00 admission (11/20), 10am-4pm. Special unpublished artists exhibition and sale (call if you're interested in participating). Also, win original art from one of Image's top creators; *Magic: The Gathering* Tournament begins at 10am (11/20 show only); spectacular door prizes. Appearing 10/23, Image presents *Team 7* artist Aron Weisenfeld ($5.00 admission). Look for our 3-day Super Expo at the Oakland Convention Center on Jan. 13-15, 1995. Contact: Bill Lee @ 415-333-8100.

DECEMBER 10, LOS ANGELES

DMD Show Productions, LAX Marriott Hotel, 5855 West Century Blvd., 100 tables @ $80-$100 (for 1) and $150-$190 (for 2), $3.50 admission, 9am-5pm. Guests: Ultraverse titles: *The Night Man* & *Prototype* artists James Pascoe, David Ammerman, and Darick Robertson (also *New Warriors*). Also: Dodgers outfielder Billy Ashley. Contact: David Trestrail @ 805-723-6892.

CONNECTICUT

NOVEMBER 26-27, HARTFORD

Hartford Civic Center Sportscards and Comic Book Show, Hartford Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Plaza, 100 tables @ $130 each, $4.00 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Don Marcotte (former Boston Bruin), Rico Petrocelli (former Boston Red Sox player). Contact: Schenker Promotions @ 908-223-1917.

FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 6, TAMPA

Comic Book Mega Show IV, The Colony Hotel, 820 East Busch Blvd. & I-275, $3.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Gold Edition comic book door prizes. Thousands of Golden Age, Silver Age, and Modern Age comics. Special signer to be announced. Contact: James Breitbeil for more info @ 407-426-7745.

KENTUCKY

NOVEMBER 6, ASHLAND

River Cities Comic Con, Elk's Hall, 900 Carter Avenue (9th & Carter), 28 tables @ $40 each in advance, $2.00 admission, children 6 and under free, 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

MARYLAND

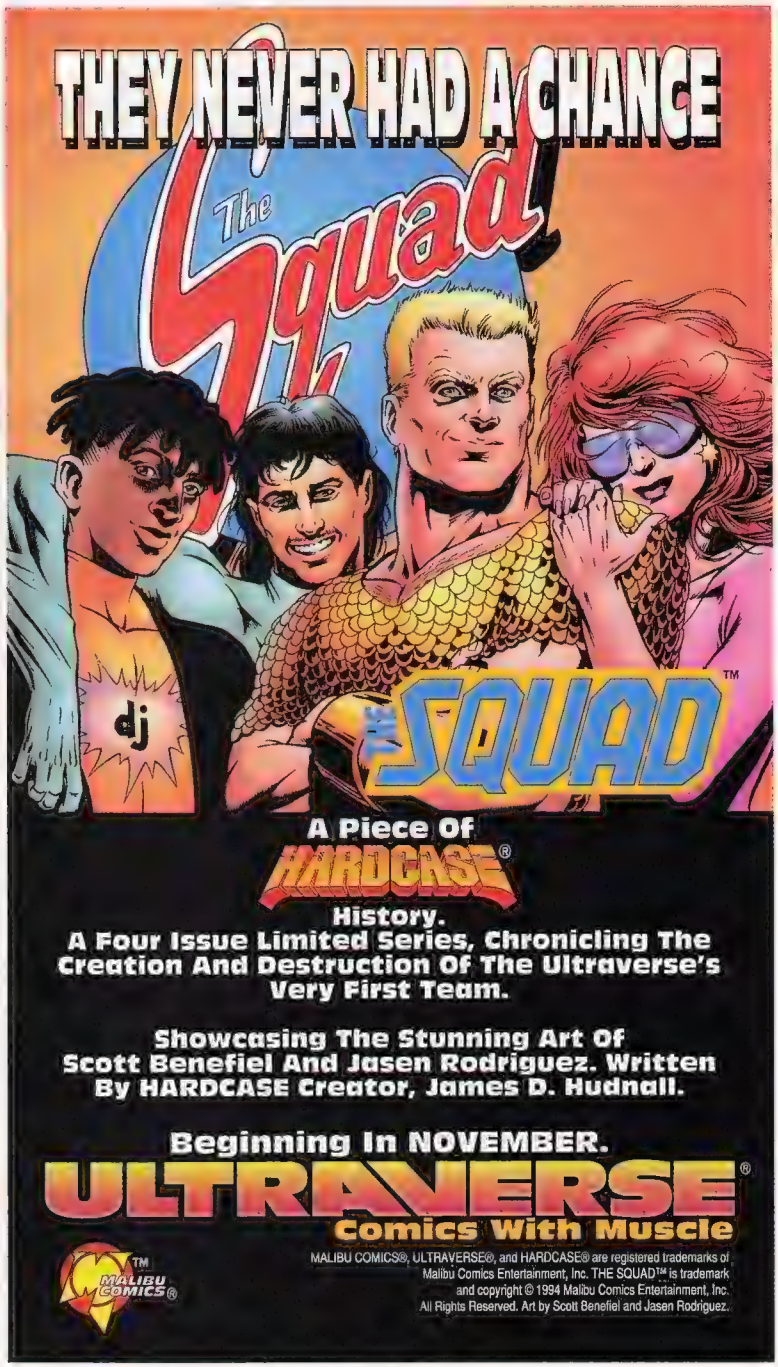
NOVEMBER 13, CALVERTON

Clubhouse Collectibles Comics and Sports Card Show, Calverton Holiday Inn, 4095 Powder Mill Road (off I-95, exit 29B), 50 tables @ $40 each, $2.00 admission (1st 25 entrants free), 10am-4pm. Contact: Daryl B. Jones (Clubhouse Collectibles) @ 301-559-8337.

MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 13, WOBURN

Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Ramada Hotel, Exit 35 off of Rt. 128 (next to Showcase Cinemas), 35 tables @ $60 each, $2.00 admission, children 16 & under $1.00, 11am-5pm. Videos, toys, models, Japanese-related items, supplies, and more. Up to $200 in credit raffles, freebies. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.



NOVEMBER 20, NATICK
Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn Crown Plaza, Exit 12 off Mass Pike East on Rt. 9 (across from the Natick Mall), 35 tables @ $60 each, $2.00 admission, children 16 & under $1.00, 11am-5pm. Videos, toys, models, Japanese-related items, Golden and Silver Age comics, supplies, and more. $200 in credit raffles. Freebies. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NOVEMBER 27, MARLBORO
Ultimate Comics, Holiday Inn Rt. 20, Exit 24A off 495, 70 tables @ $50 (on the wall) & $40 (inside) each, $3.00 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: To be announced. Contact for more info: R.C. Comics @ 508-478-4360 or Rob @ 508-634-1274.

NOVEMBER 27, RANDOLPH
Comic & Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn, exit 5A off Rt. 128N (next to Lombardo's, formerly Chateau DeVille), 35 tables @ $60 each, $2.00 admission, children 16 & under $1.00, 11am-5pm. Videos, toys, models, Japanese-related items, Golden and Silver Age comics, supplies, and more. $200 in credit raffles, freebies. Contact for more info: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

MICHIGAN

NOVEMBER 5-6, ANN ARBOR
Ann Arbor Comic Con, Domino's Farms Prairie Hall (Lobby M), 24 Frank Lloyd Wright Drive (take U.S. 23 to Plymouth Road or Exit 41 east on Plymouth, make left on Earhart Drive to Frank Lloyd Wright Drive), over 130 tables @ $125 each, $3.00 admission. Custom airbrushing & art contest, comic art workshop/seminar, door prize drawings, giveaways at the door. Guests: Steve Lieber (*Hawkman* artist), Randy Asplund-Faith and Susan VanCamp (*Magic: The Gathering*). Other guests include: Jeff Barker, Dirk Johnson, Arvell Jones, Keith Pollard, John Watkins-Chow, Charles Yates, Robert A. Kraus, David Perrin, and Scott Rosema. Free giveaways, art contest, and comic art workshops presented by Infinity Studios. Contact: Joe Makled @ 313-944-2815.

NEW JERSEY

NOVEMBER 27, TINTON FALLS
Monmouth County Comic Con, Holiday Inn, Garden State Parkway Exit 105, 40 tables @ $45 each, $2.00 admission, 9:30am-4:30pm. Guests: Doug Baron (artist/creator, *Sugar Ray Finhead*) and Dave Megill (writer/creator, *The Nailer*). Contact: Dan Campbell @ 908-531-9281.

OHIO

NOVEMBER 5, CANTON
Land of Cran Comics, off of I-77, 4651 Whipple Avenue NW, Marketplace Plaza (South of Belden Village Mall). Guests from 12 noon-5pm: Joe Madureira (1993 *Deadpool* series and *Uncanny X-Men*), and Tony Daniel (*X-Force*). Contact: Shane Simek @ 216-492-9606 for more info.

NOVEMBER 26-27, COLUMBUS
Mid-Ohio-Con, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus Convention Center, 350 N. High Street, $8.00 admission per day, children 6 & under free. Ticketmaster charge by phone: 614-431-3600. Guests: Sergio Aragones (*Groo*), Darryl Banks (*Green Lantern*), John Byrne (*Next Men* and *Babe*), Gary Cody (cover painter, *Next Men* and *Babe*), Dick DeBartolo (*Mad*), Dick Giordano (famous artist—on *Green Arrow*, *Batman*, and many others—& editor), Tony Isabella (creator, *Black Lightning*), Joe Jusko (Marvel Masterpieces card set painter, courtesy of FPG), Steve Lieber (*Hawkman*), Bill Messner-Loebs (*The Maxx*), P. Craig Russell (*Sandman* #50), Stan Sakai (*Usagi Yojimbo*), Louise Simonson (*Superman: The Man of Steel*), Walt Simonson (*Star Slammers*), Don Simpson (*Megaton Man*), Beau Smith (Image Marketing Director, *Guy Gardner: Warrior* writer), Jeff Smith (*Bone*), Chris Sprouse (*Legionnaires*), Jim Valentino (*Shadowhawk*), Mark Waid (*Flash*), and many more guests to be announced. Contact for more info: Roger A. Price @ 419-526-0438 (Mon.-Fri., 9am-6pm EST).

PENNSYLVANIA

NOVEMBER 11-13, GETTYSBURG
Gettysburg Sci-Fi/Comicon I, Gettysburg Ramada Inn, 2634 Emmitsburg Road, 65-plus tables @ $150 each for the three days, admission: $15.00 (single day), $35.00 (3-day passes) admission, Friday 12 noon-9pm, Saturday 9am-5pm, Sunday 10am-4pm. Guests: Walter Koenig (*Star Trek*'s Chekov, writer of *Raver*), Gordon Purcell (artist, *Star Trek/Deep Space Nine* crossover), Boris Vallejo (artist, Sci-Fi Fantasy), Julie Bell (artist, Sci-Fi Fantasy & wife of Boris Vallejo), Mike Barreiro (inker, *Tales of the Jedi*) and Joseph Linsner (artist, *Cry for Dawn*). Contact: Bill Williams @ 717-267-1610.

NOVEMBER 25-27, PHILADELPHIA
Northeast Philly #1, Northeast Marketplace (Mall), Grant Avenue off Roosevelt Blvd., 85 tables @ $125 each, free admission, Friday & Saturday 10am-9pm, Sunday 10am-5pm. Guests: Mark Waid (artist, *Flash*) and Tom McCraw (writer, *Legion of Super-Heroes*, colorist, *Batman Returns*). Contact: Greg Petrino @ 215-968-8577.

TENNESSEE

NOVEMBER 19, CHATTANOOGA
Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Days Inn, I-75 East Ridge Exit, 35 tables @ $45 each, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Contact: Linda Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

NOVEMBER 26-27, KNOXVILLE
Card, Comic, and Racing Show, Ramada Inn, Cedar Bluff Rd., 35 tables @ $75 for 2 days, $1.50 admission, Saturday 9am-5pm, Sunday 11am-5pm. Contact: Linda Pogue @ 615-962-2354 days, 615-469-7227 nights.

TEXAS

NOVEMBER 5, HOUSTON
Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn Northwest, 14996 N.W. Freeway, 290 at Beltway 8 Exit West Little York, 35 tables @ $65 each, $2.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of Marvel cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 6, HOUSTON (Clear Lake)
Comic Carnival Presents Magic & Fantasy Card Show, Ramada/Kings Inn, 1301 Nasa Rd. 1-Clear Lake, $4.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Tournament Play: Weenie Deck & Open Deck, door prizes, tournament prizes, dealer tables, play *Magic*, *Jyhad*, *Spellfire*, and more all day!! Call 713-335-1130 for more information.

NOVEMBER 12, HOUSTON
Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn Hobby Airport, 9100 Gulf Freeway, I-45 S. exit, College Airport, 45 tables @ $65 each, $2.00 admission, 9am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of Marvel cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 13, AUSTIN
Comic and Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North IH35, 45 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1.50 admission, 9am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 13, BEAUMONT
Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 and Walden, 3950 I-10 Exit Walden, 30 tables @ $45 each or 2 for $85, $1.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 19, HOUSTON
Comic Carnival Presents Magic & Fantasy Card Show, Ramada Hotel 7787 Katy Freeway (I-10, take Silber/Antoine exit), $4.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Tournament Play: Weenie Deck & Open Deck, door prizes, tournament prizes, dealer tables, play *Magic*, *Jyhad*, *Spellfire*, and more all day!! Call 713-335-1130 for more information.

NOVEMBER 19-20, HOUSTON
Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn, I-10 and Silber (7611 Katy Freeway, exit Silber), 50 tables @ $125 each, $2.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of Marvel cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 20, SAN ANTONIO
Comic and Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 7750 Briaridge, I-10W at 410W, 40 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 25-27, HOUSTON
Comic Fair and Nostalgia Convention, Ramada Northwest, 12801 N.W. Frwy., 290 at Pinemont, 140 (6 ft.) tables @ $85 each until November 4 (then call for new prices), $4.00 (1-day)/$10.00 (3-day) admission, children 12 and under $2.00, Friday 3-8pm. Saturday 10am-7pm. Sunday 11am-4pm. *Magic: The Gathering* & POG Tournaments, Action Figure Contest, charity auction (Saturday, 7:30 pm). Receive three free comics or a Marvel wax pack with this ad and paid admission. Guest: Don Rosa; other guests to be announced, free autographs. Contact: Larry Taylor for convention and dealer info @ 713-667-8697.

NOVEMBER 26, SAN ANTONIO
Comic and Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 7750 Briaridge, I-10W at 410W, 40 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1.00 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

NOVEMBER 27, AUSTIN
Comic and Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North IH35, 45 tables @ $55 each or 2 for $100, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

DECEMBER 4, HOUSTON
Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn Southwest, 11160 S.W. Freeway at Beltway 8, 35 tables @ $65 each, $2.00 admission, 9am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards. Receive a free pack of Marvel or comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 20, TYSONS CORNER/FALLS CHURCH
Comic Book & Trading Card Show, Tysons Ramada Hotel, 7801 Leesburg Pike (Falls Church), 80 tables @ $65 each, $2.00 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Capital Associates @ 703-503-5834.

WEST VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 13, PARKERSBURG
Parkersburg-Marietta Comic Con, Holiday Inn, I-77 at exit 176 (Rt. 50), 40 tables @ $40 each or 3 for $100.00 in advance, $2.00 admission, children 6 & under free, 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056. ☆

If you'd like to use *Wizard*'s magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

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"What's Coming Next?"

by Todd McFarlane

A question I'm often asked is "What's coming next?" This month, I thought I would talk about the direction that Todd McFarlane Productions is moving in with future Spawn products.

In upcoming issues of *Spawn*, I will be bringing in Greg Capullo to help me out on some of the artwork. With Greg's assistance, I will be able to maintain a monthly schedule for the very first time. In the past two years I've been on the book, a five- or six-week schedule was about the best I could do. By bringing on someone to ease some of my burden, it will not only allow me to not become overwhelmed and uninterested in the book, but it will keep me geared up for the stories I want to accomplish in *Spawn*. Visually, I think the book will look even better. By getting some help, Greg and I will be able to give more detail to the pages by teaming up together, since we both play on each other's strengths. Everything you enjoy in *Spawn* will stay, but I can strive to deliver an even better product.

Many might believe that I'm abandoning ship, but it's quite the opposite. Now I will able to produce more books per year, and that will keep my enthusiasm going. So, I'll stay on the book even longer, and instead of saying I'll quit at issue #40 because I'm tired, I'll be able to stay on until #100 and beyond. I will continue to write the book, although you shouldn't be surprised to see a special guest-writer now and then.

Besides *Spawn*, I want to slowly roll out mini-series that spotlight some of *Spawn*'s cast of characters. Earlier this year, I came out with the *Violator* mini-series, which seemed to go over well and proved to me that there's room for more than one Spawn-related product at a time. Later on in the year, you'll be seeing my second mini-series: *Angela*, starring the character who first appeared in *Spawn* #9, and written by Neil Gaiman. Neil is coming back to the character by writing this three-issue mini-series, starting in December, with artwork by Greg Capullo and Mark Pennington. What I'd like to try to do is make the book worth buying for the people who like *Spawn*. Greg and Mark have had a prior relationship with Spawn by doing related projects. If you thought their previous work was good, then you can rest assured you'll like what they'll be doing on *Angela*.

Alan Moore is busy writing a four- or six-issue mini-series about Spawn and vampires, based on the fact that Spawn can be perceived as a vampire. He is a guy who wears a big cloak, has superhuman strength, is almost impervious to harm, and lurks around in the shadows at night. I told Alan to make it as dark and grim as possible, but also to give it twists and turns. That'll probably be out next spring or summer.

Beyond that, I've talked to both Alan and Neil about follow-ups to their stories. With Alan, I want to do another Violator mini-series. With Neil, a Medieval Spawn mini-series.

I'll also start to put out stuff like posters and things like that. I've been in contact with Jim Lee, who has a spectacular new trading card company; if I don't do my own cards, he'll be the guy I go to. I've believed from the very beginning, when we started Image Comics, that we needed to bond together and help each other on certain levels. In turn, I'd like to give Jim and the rest of the Image co-founders the opportunity to do toys with my toy company Todd Toys, so they don't go to another toy manufacturer, just like I wouldn't have to go to another card manufacturer or animation studio. We could all keep it in the family.

Speaking of the toys, my second wave of toys has five characters: Angela, Malebolgia, Commando Spawn, Chapel, and Badrock. I will be finalizing deals with Rob Liefeld, Jim Lee, and other Image creators. I'll be enlarging the Spawn line, and I expect a WetWorks line from Jim's WildStorm Productions that will consist of five figures with accessories, a Youngblood line with another five figures with accessories, and a 12-inch line which will include as many Image characters as possible, including a Savage Dragon and Shadowhawk figure. And the 12-inch figures will not be larger versions of the six-inch figures; the 12-inchers will come with some added feature, because if you're going to pay twice the price, you should get twice the value.

In June and July '95, I'll have two versions of video games coming out, and work is currently under way on a Spawn animated series that will be a dark and gritty prime-time show aimed at an older audience. And there's also a Spawn movie in the works, but I'm finding out that Hollywood has its own pace, and all I can do is control my own.

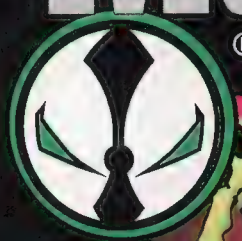
So for the next foreseeable 365 days, I see that my plate is pretty full. Between expanding upon the Spawn legend and helping my fellow Image guys, I'm hoping that there will be more than enough entertainment coming from all my endeavors. If you'd like to know more, please write me through *Spawn* or ask me at a convention. In the meantime, enjoy, and thanks for your support. ☆

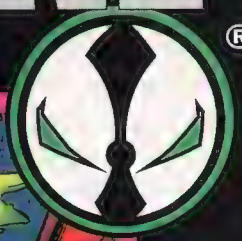
Any industry professional who wishes to respond to the information or opinions stated here should write to: E.G.O., 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff, or Image Comics.

todd McFARLANE®





SPAWN

ALMOST MONTHLY FROM IMAGE COMICS™

WizaRd BulPen

The Ghoulies Take It! The wait is over; the results are in! The proud winners of the *Wizard* office decorating contest-o-rama are the Groovy Ghoulies: Editorial Assistants Bob "The Undertaker with a Flair" Marshall and Dave "Happy to be Here" Prager! From the very second the contest was announced, their office became more than just a room—it became a veritable museum of Pop Culture! With hanging love beads at the doorway, a hip Darth Vader to greet you as you enter, and everything from a plasma globe to a fleet of starships, the Ghoulies bring all visitors into another dimension of sight and sound! Dave's favorite decorative aspect is "the sick and twisted things we did to the posters", (Pity the poor Shatner!) while Bob notes, "I'm glad we won, because it saves me the trouble of killing everyone else." For their incredibly hard work, these two nuts—er, guys (who recently suffered the loss of officemates Dan "I'm off to Marketing" Reilly and Phil "Back to school" Colligan, but gained new Research Editor Mike "Uhhh...are you guys OK?" Fasolo) will be treated to a dinner by the *losers*, who consist of (hey, you know these names by now): Andrew Kardon, Marc Wilkofsky, and Hank Bordowitz in the spider-webbed, animal-filled Editorial Jungle of Doom, Matt Tierney and Arlene So in the surreal Art Den, and Pat McCallum and Brian Cunningham in the easy-feeling Rookery. Congrats to the Ghoulies!

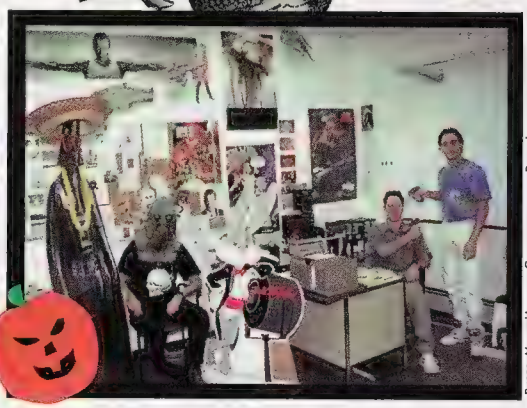


PHOTO: VINNIE HOLLAND. CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON ™ & © UNIVERSAL STUDIOS.

The winners! From left to right: Hawaiian Darth Vader, Bob Marshall with Creature mask, Bugs Bunny, Dave Prager, and Mike Fasolo.

UP CLOSE...

Arlene So
Design Assistant, *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What is it you do at *Wizard*?
Help Art Director Matt Tierney make the magazine look good, pick out the coolest art for the Drawing Board, scan *all* the books for the Price Guide till I crave Chunky Chips Ahoy!™ cookies, and remind everyone of how I ate 80 pounds of bacon during my last vacation in Canada.

Your favorite section in *Wizard*?
Magic Words. Jim McLauchlin is a stud!

How has working at *Wizard* changed you?
I became one of the nutcases trapped in the Designing Inferno.

Last good movie you saw?
Clear and Present Danger.

Last good book you read?
1984, by George Orwell.

What would your biography be called?
So...So?

Favorite TV show?
The Simpsons, and *Rough Guide* on PBS.

Favorite musical group?
Pearl Jam.

Who would play you in a movie?
Rosalind Chao, who plays Keiko, O'Brien's wife in *ST: DS9*.

Actor with whom you'd like to star in a film?
John Malkovich.

Favorite comic right now?
Batman Adventures.

Favorite comic of all-time?
Watchmen.

What are/were your nicknames?
Some people just call me by my last name. C'mon, with a name as short as mine, who needs nicknames?

What superpower would you want, and why?
The power to change myself into Harley Quinn of *Batman Adventures.* No Joker obsession needed.

ILLUSTRATION: DAVID PRAGER

Top 10 rejected names for the third Batman flick:

10. Hey, Look Everybody, It's Batman
9. Batman "Does It"
8. Batman: Strike Three
7. You Bet Your Ass It's Batman
6. Willow
5. Batman Está en la Casa
4. Four Weddings and a Batman
3. Batman Goes to France
2. Jurassic Batman
1. Abbott and Costello's Corpses Meet Batman

✓ **WIZARD PRESS ANNUAL PRICE GUIDE** Here's something you've been waiting for, comic collector! If you're looking for **over 100,000 value listings for comics** from the Golden Age to the present, plus **thousands of cover illustrations** in color and black-and-white, and several **informative articles** on the history and current state of the comic book industry, then this is the book for you! Shipping in November, this book features a striking **Wolverine cover by the Hildebrandt Brothers**, an awesome uncut four-card Fleer X-Men insert, and the chance to win Acclaim's Wolverine video game! *This* is the one to *have*! **$12.95**

✓ **COLLECTOR'S SPORTSLOOK #13** Sound the horn and strike up the band! *Collector's Sportslook* is celebrating its **first anniversary** with one hell of an issue. Leading things off in this December issue, on sale in late October, is a look at the **25 most popular players of 1994**. We'd like to tell you who's #1, but that would spoil the fun. The new issue also boasts **a ton of contests**, including one which might make *you*—get this—the **editor** of the June 1995 issue of *Sportslook*! This ish comes with a special SkyBox football insert card, and is more fun than watching Pat McCallum eat a week-old bucket of chicken. This is one issue you won't wanna miss! **$3.95**

WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS VOLUME ONE, FORTY (40), DECEMBER 1994.
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Here's looking at... VAL SEMEIKS

by Rogers Cadenhead

LOBO ™ & © DC COMICS

Thank goodness artist Val Semeiks isn't anything like Lobo, the maniacal DC character he currently illustrates. If he were, this interview wouldn't have happened in such a friendly manner. However, the 39-year-old Semeiks does admit that he's interested in unfriendly characters. "It's always interesting to follow the villain," Semeiks says, explaining some of Lobo's appeal. "He's not a hero, though he's been called one."

Semeiks helped launch the *Lobo* ongoing series in 1993, and has built a reputation for cartoon carnage. The average issue of *Lobo* wreaks more havoc than Liz Taylor at a buffet line.

PHOTO: J. SCHUYLER

"It's kind of a release to read the character," Semeiks says. "It's so politically incorrect."

The artist was 31 when he got his big break in comics after working in advertising illustration. Semeiks and a friend, writer Charles Santino, pitched a story to *Savage Sword of Conan* editor Larry Hama that earned the artist an assignment to do King Kull backup stories for Marvel Comics.

The barbarity continued when Semeiks got the nod to draw *Conan the Barbarian*. "I'm a big Robert E. Howard fan," he says of Conan's creator. "I was really happy to be working on Conan." Switching to DC's *Demon* (vol. 3) was a change of pace after 29 issues on Marvel's adventurer. "As much as I liked the character, you can't keep doing the same thing," he adds.

Lobo teams Semeiks up with his collaborator for 28 issues of *Demon*—writer Alan Grant. When he took over with #1, Semeiks wanted to tweak the tone of *Lobo* a little from the Keith Giffen/Grant/Simon Bisley mini-series of 1991. "I liked the humor of it, but a lot of the Bisley stuff was a little too graphically violent for me," Semeiks says. He describes the book as "a hardcore Three Stooges."

Another thing he compares *Lobo* to is *Judge Dredd*, the past stomping grounds of collaborator Grant, who worked on the Fleetway series. In the works for 1995 is a Lobo/Judge Dredd crossover that takes the Czarnian to Mega-City One. "I'm looking forward to that one," Semeiks says.

A different look for the artist comes in November's *Big Book of Urban Legends*, a collection of brief stories by different pros for DC's new Paradox Press imprint. "It's my own inks, on a tale called 'The Tummy Ache,'" he says. "The book's an attempt to open up a new market."

Semeiks, who lives in Upstate N.Y., is married and has a 20-year-old daughter. Unlike many of the characters that meet Lobo, the artist is happy to be around the character every day. "There's a lot of freedom in what I get to create and how I draw it," he says. "It's very liberating. I'm having fun."

First comic read...
Sgt. Rock, or a Carl Barks comic where Uncle Scrooge and the boys look for lost Inca treasure.

Favorite comics of all time...
Jack Kirby *Fantastic Fours*.

Favorite work of your own...
Always what I'm currently doing, because my art is still getting better. For an artist, you're never happy with the work you did before.

Comics you currently read...
[Books by] Moebius, the Fantagraphics Hal Foster reprints, *Hellboy*.

Person you'd most like to meet...
Leonardo da Vinci. One of the greatest minds of all time.

Superpower you'd most like to have...
I want to possess the Cosmic Cube. When I'm tired of being omnipotent, I can set that thing on the shelf.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Pepperoni pizza—my favorite *any* time of day.

Favorite pastime or hobby...
Getting outdoors, hiking, and canoeing.

Favorite television show...
The Simpsons.

The last time you went trick-or-treating, you went as...
An Arab terrorist. This was a good 12 years ago.

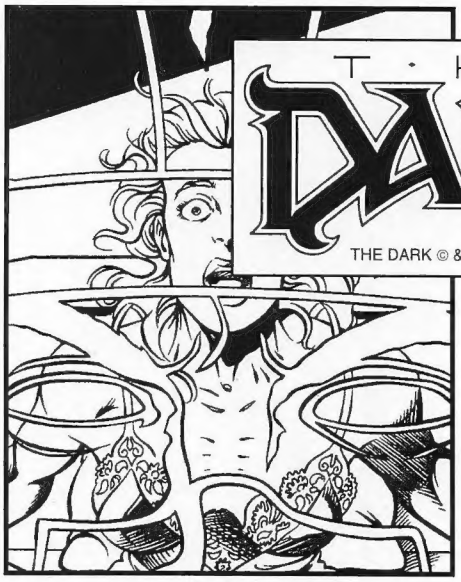
Last good movie you saw...
Akira.

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Homer Simpson—he's my idol.

Favorite cartoon...
Looney Tunes, especially [the ones with] Yosemite Sam.

If you had the power of the Beyonder...
I probably should say [I'd create] world peace and happiness, but it would be to draw with my left hand, so I could work faster.

Why do you read *Wizard*?
To keep up on current comic news and see what's hot. ☆



THE DARK

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ISSUE ONE
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January 1995

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40 pgs of Full Color

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Todd Lidstone
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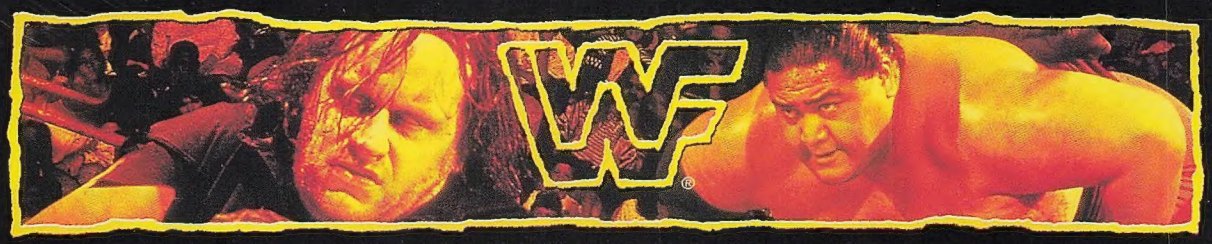

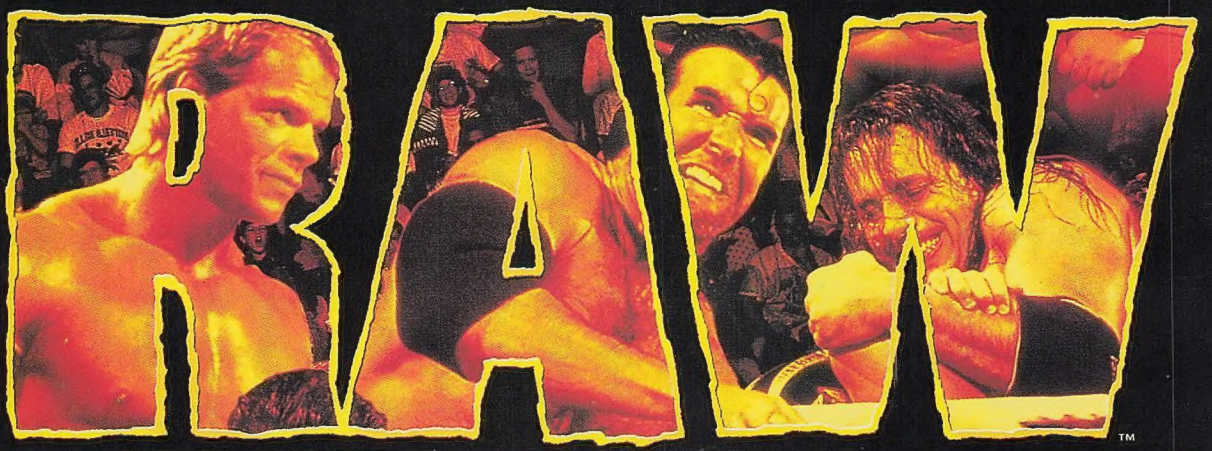

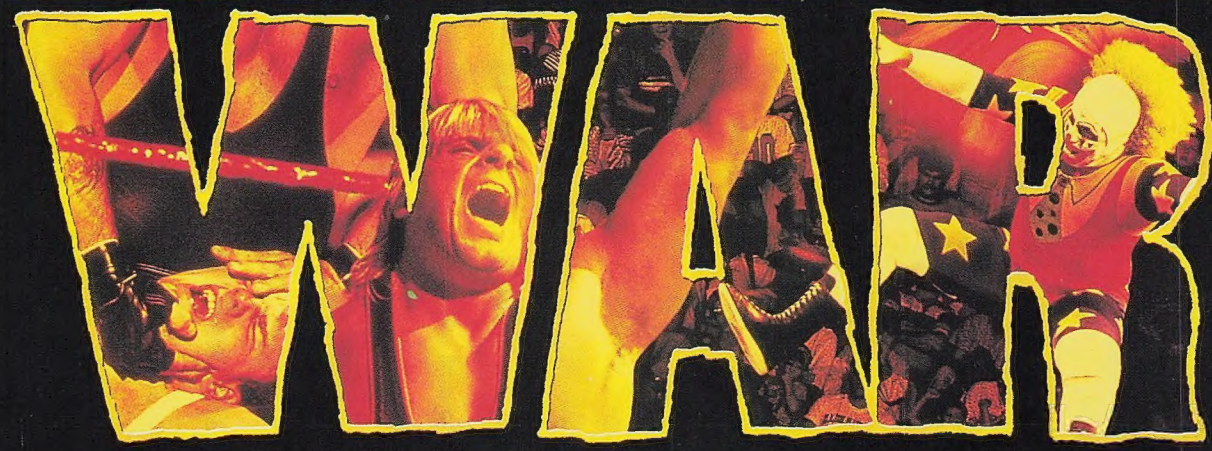

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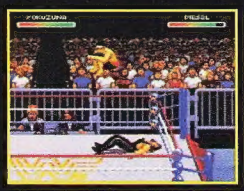
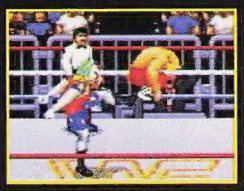
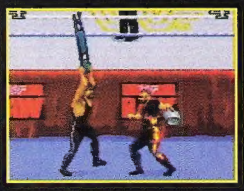


ALL NEW MEGA-MOVES LIKE THE CANNONBALL...

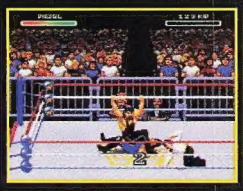


AND THE FIELD GOAL KICK!

FIRST 4-PLAYER WF® GAME!



OUT-OF-THE-RING MAYHEM!



NEW PINS AND SUBMISSIONS!

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